

A CONTRACT
ANSWER
TO A
Correct Copy of LETTERS
WRITTEN

By Mr. Matthew Hole, Vicar of Stoke-
gurssey, in Sommersetshire:

Concerning the

Gift and Forms of Prayer.

WHEREIN

Bishop Wilkins's Description of the Gift of
PRAYER is Vindicated.

The Necessity of Suiting Prayer to the great Variety
of Providential Occurrences, Demonstrated.

The Expediency of Universal Imposing Spectacles
and Crutches, Modestly Doubted.

The hard Case of the Two Thousand Ministers,
Silenc'd 1662, a-fresh Represented.

The Necessity of the Nonconformists Ministry Ma-
nifested.

The History of Praying by Inspiration, Considered.
Free-Prayer no Jesuitical Invention, nor Introduc'd
into these Kingdoms by Romish Emissaries, &c.

All Humbly Submitted to Consideration.

By J. M. Minister of the Gospel in Bridgwater.

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REMARKS ON THE PREFACE.

IT having pleas'd the Supream LORD, to re-
voke the Sword's Commission, and restore a Ci-
vil Peace, it might be Expected, and 'tis greatly
Desired, that the Ecclesiastical Ceremonial War
were at an End: But as the Persecution Abroad,
seems rather reviv'd upon the Peace, so there are
some that seem resolv'd rather to re-inflame than
allay the Animosities at Home. I must confess,
'tis with great Reluctance that I bear any part in
this Present Controversy, especially when I consider
to how much better Purpose those worthy Brethren
both Conformists and Nonconformists in London,
do employ both their Tongues and Pens; viz. To
Animate those Famous Societies for Reformation,
who, I hope, will now have new Life put into 'em
by a truly Honourable Address, and an Immortal
Proclamation.

But since Necessity extorts an Answer to these
Letters, the Occasion and the Stile of 'em is Re-
markable.

(1.) *The Occasion, viz. Some Passages in a Visitation Sermon, (which in Justice to the Author, and kindness to the Reader, I shall Re-print at the Beginning.) On the Vindication of these Passages in another Sermon, I shall add an Appendix in the the Close. The Vicar saith, The first of these was Preach'd in a Divided Town — I think no Town in the Kingdom less Divided, (notwithstanding his Impotent Attempts to that end) in Affection and mutual Conversation, or more entirely United in the Interest of the Government; of which that no fewer than three or four of the Corporation have the Honour and Trust to serve his Majesty, and the County at large in the Commission of the Peace, is an undeniable Evidence. No less notorious is it, that the Design of the Sermon was to make Free Prayer to be abhorred in Publick Worship, and not meerly a set Liturgy to be preferred.*

Whether the latter Lucky Sermon had the Happiness of Convincing or only Confirming, I have no concern to enquire; the Strength of the Arguments for either will afterward appear.

2. *The Stile of these Letters; and that he tells us is Pleasant and Severe, with the Reason of both. Those that have (1.) a seeming Air, are the third and fourth, which I don't Question have by this time also pleas'd many, and convinc'd some: Some are convinced of the Folly, others of the Facetiousness, but I think few of the Wit or Gravity of 'em. The main Reason of the Airiness is, to keep the Adversary to a Point, and prevent*

prevent Excursions: But let the Impartial Reader judge, whether six, if not thirteen first Letters be not one continued Ramble from the Point in Controversy: For the Question is not concerning Prayer in General, but Ministerial Prayer, whether there is any such Gift of Prayer now, when Liturgies are composed,—to be coveted by Ministers, &c. (2.) For the Severity, he might have said Scurrility) of Stile that runs through all his Letters; nothing is more obvious than the Supercilious Contempt, with which he treats all that don't humbly submit to his Dictates: It may be said of him as Rivet of a Gentleman of the same Temper, Non potest vir ille sine Convitiis quemquam a quo Dissentit vel in levissimis nominare.—He can't name any that Dissent from him in the smallest matters without Reproaches. 'Tis a small matter that I am the Adversary, when such as Mr. Calvin, Mr. Baxter, and the Two thousand Silenc'd Ministers are treated so contemptuously.

But he pretends a Reason to justify this Sharpness too; and that is, Because Obstinacy is added to Error; Yea, he lays violent hands on Two Scriptures, Tit. 1. 13. Gal. 3. 1. to make 'em su'serve his Design, whereas he can prove on us no unsoundness in the Faith, nor disobedience to the Truth, that are there rebuk'd by the Apostle. But the Truth is, the Nonconformists have been so used to severe Canons (that Excommunicate ipso facto for wicked Errors, when proved neither Errors nor Wicked) and to Sharp Canonical Men, who in want of Reason for Conviction, and Penal Statutes for Execution,

fly to Revilings and wresting of Scripture, that they are not at all surpris'd.

But above all, the Reader may take notice of his disgraceful Reflections on Free (Nick-nam'd Extempore) Prayer, and yet his dreadful Apprehensions of it: It would make one smile to see how he Calculates the Danger of it. (1st) From its Fascination, or Bewitching quality; as if it had over-look'd our Church, and made her Dwindle away in a Consumption; especially from the Silliness and Injudiciousness of the People. The Vulgar (saith he) are generally caught by the Novelty of Words, and run a gadding or madding after their own and others Inventions, &c. Well! But what Remedy? Why, one in Hand, and another in Hope. Let me transcribe a few of his Words in a Letter of his (not yet Printed) where he speaks most plainly of the Danger of this Gift of Prayer, his Fear, and the Cure. And to tell you the truth, saith he, the not setting aside these Pretended Gifts by Publick Authority, hath employed the Gifts of the Best and Ablest Persons (as for Instance, he with his Pacquet of Letters) to lay 'em aside by Argument and Persuasion — and if these do not prevail, What then? Why then, 'tis time for Authority to work, lest they who now would be Indulg'd as Weak Brethren, do by that means in a little time grow too strong for their Masters. By that Means! and in a little Time! are frightful Considerations. For Remedy, what can we expect but some Roaring Canon against all those that dare Pray without
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Book? But after all this Danger, who can think that the Platform of the Present Constitution is so feeble as to be blown away by a little Fanciful Breath? If so, 'tis a Pious Conformist expresses it, a Sign that as it was Drawn in 1662. it did lean altogether to the one side, and then, no wonder that so many that do wholly Rely upon it, cry out, it falls, it falls, and why? But because it needs a larger Foundation.

Yet, this I am fully satisfied in, That sincere Prayer (whether conceiv'd or compos'd) is as ill chosen an Enemy as any wise Man can light on, and there are none that at the long Run do ridicule it, or Triumph in the Conquest of it. I have Read in the Late Unhappy Civil Wars, when the King's Party had Subdued the West, some Publish'd a Triumphant Paper, and sent it into other Kingdoms, wherein was this Expression among many other Confident ones, Nil restat superare Regem, &c. The entire Sentence was Ambiguous, and capable of a Double Construction; either thus, there remains nothing for the King to Conquer, but only the Prayers of a few Fanaticks; or there remains nothing to Conquer the King, but the Prayers of a few Fanatick People.—— And it seems their Prayers at that time prov'd too strong for the Extemporary Effusions of Hellish Oaths, Curses, and Self damning Imprecations. But

I shall remit the Reader to the following Answer when I have told him

(1.) That

(1.) *That we are not upon equal Terms in a Controversy of this Nature: The Vicar may Calumniate Free Prayer as he pleases, call it the Devil's Master piece, a Jesuitical Invention, more destructive to all Sober Piety and Devotion than all the other Arts and Devices of Deceivers, &c. and there's no Statute against Depravation, — no flaming Sword of a Penal Law to hinder him. 'Tis a considerable Advantage for Men to have the Ball before 'em, and Wind and Sun on their side, and the Leave of saying what they will without controul.*

(2.) *'Tis not a Liturgy or Free Prayer that is the main Hinge on which the Controversy turns 'twixt these unalterable Men, and their Dissenting Brethren; though we are injuriously represented as Irreconcilable Enemies to all Forms. There are many more grievous things, as Subscription, Declaration of Assent and Consent, Re-ordination, &c. This Century hath been unhappy in the Extremes, it may be the next may find some middle Temper.*

(3.) *I take the Real Design of the Vicar's Sermons and Letters to be the total Exclusion of Free Prayer from all Publick Ministrations: (yea, if there be any force in some of his Arguings 'twill be excluded Family and Closet too.) This I conclude not only from his Subscription to use no other than the Liturgy in Publick Prayer, &c. but from his pouring all the Contempt imaginable upon it; his Care to secure the Reverence and Harmony of Publick Worship, which can't be done if Ministers are permitted to use conceiv'd or compos'd*

compos'd Prayers of their own before and after Sermon: For Crude and Indigested Things may be vented in 'em, as if they had no Liturgy at all; so that Confinement is the alone Security. Indeed our Author is forc'd to say, p. 76. that there's none will blame us if we use Free Prayer on some Occasion. But upon what Occasion? Why, neither on Stated, Ordinary, nor Extraordinary Occasions, but if there should be any unheard of Occurency; and then too with respect to Authority, &c. so that I reckon he hath retracted his Grant, and we have no Prayer left but what the Church provides.

There is but one thing more, in the Close of his Preface, where he falsely represents me as not giving my Consent to the Publishing of my Letters. Now, I must confess, I am not so vain as to think that either he or I can bless the World with further Discoveries in this Matter, than have been made by those after mention'd; yet the Matter of Fact was this. When he had finish'd his Twenty Letters (and one more, that was so profanely Scurrilous, that either his Friend detain'd it, or he himself revok'd it, however by a mistake it fell in'o my hands) he writ me that he intended the Letters for the Press, and was Correcting or Revising 'em for that purpose, (and I see he hath made near an hundred Corrections and Alterations) and would have me send him a Correct Copy of mine. To which I replied, That though there were several Dissuasives from Printing, (among which the Danger of rekindling our Animosities at such

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a Juncture was not to me the least) yet if he must needs be again in Print to pursue his begun Quarrel, I should only expect this piece of Justice from him, viz. That he would Publish 'em all as they were written on both Sides, with what further Animadversions on 'em he pleas'd. — Any Correcter Copy of my Letters, or Consent to publish 'em on other Terms, I had neither Time, nor Mind to give him; yet he disingenuously tells the World that I would not Consent to their Publishing, when I consented to it on that Condition which all Mankind count the fairest, viz. that as they were Written, so they should be Publish'd. But now they having suffered such Changes, in some places near a whole Page Additions, I must be obliged to add, and alter too, or none will understand the Answer. Whether he hath Answer'd all that is material in these Papers, I must leave to the Comparing Judgment of any Impartial Reader; and from what I have seen already, I have but mean Expectations from his future Performances.

Some Passages in Mr. H's Visitation Sermon, to be recurr'd to on all Occasions, offer'd in the following Answer.

PAge 10, 11. *Four or Five Gifts he Cautions the Clergy against, whereof the First is,*
 "The Gift of Extemporary Effusions in Prayer,
 "which some have miscall'd the Gift of Prayer;
 "This is not much to be affected, nor to be
 "reckoned in the number of the best Gifts; for
 "this instead of Edifying, hath greatly disturb'd
 "the Peace of the Church, and destroyed the
 "Reverence and Harmony of Publick Worship.
 "Solomon, who hath been justly reputed the
 "Wiseſt of Men, hath will'd us *not to be raſh*
 "*with our mouth, nor haſty to utter any thing before*
 "*G O D; but to conſider that G O D is in heaven, and*
 "*we are upon earth; therefore our words unto him*
 "*ſhould be few,* Ec. 5. 2. meaning, That we ſhould
 "never approach the Divine Maieſty, but with
 "the profoundeſt Awe and Reverence; and that
 "is beſt ſignifi'd by few and well weigh'd Expreſſi-
 "ons in our Addreſſes to Him; and therefore a
 "greater than Solomon, even our Bleſſed Saviour
 "himſelf,

" himself, the Head and Founder of his Church,
 " Prescribed a Form of Prayer to be used by his
 " Disciples and Followers; and the Christian
 " Church, according to his Order, hath used
 " the same ever since, and likewise Compos'd
 " her Publick Liturgies according to that excel-
 " lent Platform: And, Thanks be to G O D, our
 " Church hath at this Day one of the most Pious
 " and best Compos'd Liturgies that is extant in
 " the Christian World; so that now we need
 " only bring ardent Desires, and good Affections
 " in the use of it, and we need not doubt a Gra-
 " cious Answer and Acceptance.

" There was indeed in the Days of the Apostles
 " an extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inspirati-
 " on, called sometimes *Praying by the Spirit*,
 " which was necessary in the beginning of Chri-
 " stianity; when, as the Apostle tells us, *they*
 " *knew not how, or what to pray for as they ought*;
 " but when the Holy Spirit of G O D had di-
 " ctated the Holy Scriptures, wherein we are di-
 " rected both as to the Matter and Manner of our
 " Prayers; when the Sacred Canon was com-
 " pleted, and Publick Prayers Compos'd according
 " to the Directions of it, then this, among other
 " extraordinary Gifts, ceas'd, together with the
 " Reason of it; for the Spirit of G O D, which
 " doth nothing in vain, is not wont to give extra-
 " ordinary Assurances, when ordinary Means
 " will serve the turn.

" So

" So that all the Gift of Prayer now remaining
 " in the Church, consists not in pouring out ma-
 " ny and new Words, but in the pious Motions,
 " and good Affections of the Heart. *The Spirit*
 " *helps our infirmities still*, Rom. 8. 26. But how?
 " Not by furnishing us with new Phrases, and
 " variety of Expressions, which GOD is no
 " way delighted with, but *with sighs and groans*,
 " saith the Apostle, *that cannot be uttered*; that
 " is, by exciting the inward Desires, and breath-
 " ings of the Soul after him. Hence we read,
 " that the poor *Publican's* short Litany, *L O R D*
 " *be merciful to me a sinner*, Luke 18. 10, 11, 14.
 " prevail'd more for his Justification, than the
 " tedious Harangues of the *Pharisee*; which Sect,
 " though in outward Pretence and Appearance
 " the strictest in those Times, our Saviour blames
 " for their *babbling* and *vain repetitions in prayer*,
 " as if they *thought to be heard for their much*
 " *speaking*. And 'tis well known, what Crude
 " and Indigested, not to say Blasphemous Speeches,
 " have dropp'd from the Mouths of such bold
 " Pretenders to inspired Prayers.

" The Truth is, This Extemporary way
 " of Praying, was a thing unknown in the
 " Primitive and Purer Ages of the Church,
 " and hath plainly appeared to be a late
 " Invention, brought into these Kingdoms
 " by the Subtilty of Popish Emissaries, meer-
 " ly to Distract and Divide the People: And
 " we

" we know how they Triumph in the Schisms
" and Confusions that have been raised by
" it ; which is enough to put us out of Con-
" ceit with this Gift , and the Pretenders
" to it.

A N S W E R T O L E T T E R I.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

PErceiving your Short-skirted Patience, hath lately had so large an Exercise in the Perusal of some Letters of mine, for fear of quite unhinging your squeamish Stomach, I shall not return you the contemptuous Treatment I receive. Yet I must needs tell you,

This *Nausea*, which seizes you in the Beginning, belches out all the odious Stuff that we have to the end of your Letters, as if you were now resolv'd to supply the defect of *Penal Laws* against your Brethren, by Banter and Abuses.

Your *General Remark* on my *Papers*, needs no *Particular Reply*; the less weighty the *Queries*, the lighter the *Answer*; but to call 'em *Frivolous*, is none, in the *Balance* of any *Impartial Judge*. Your *Fancy* of my *Leaping from one Place and Thing to another*, must be calculated for the two late Reigns, when we can't deny, but we were guilty of *Excursions* from Place to Place; and that as you say too, *For fear of being Caught*. You know the *Time and Place*, when a generous *Order of Sessions* gave forty *Shillings* to any zealous *Catch-pole*, as an en-

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couragement, any where to Seize and Secure any *Non-conformist*. Then you were, as you talk now, all for Fixing, Confining, and keeping us close to one thing, viz. The Gaol. But since, through the merciful *Providence* of God, and Clemency of our *Governors*, (these your Blessed) *Catching Times* are over; and since we have only the strength of your Arguments, or the impotency of your Envy to Encounter, you may dream you are still Pursuing, when none Flees; whatever there was in your *Prisons* and *Penalties* then, there's no Danger in, nor Dread of your *Papers* now.

'Twas, I suppose, to let us see on how small a Pro-
vocation you can shew your *Rhetorick*, that you Ha-
rangue on my *merciless* treating those Reverend Bishops,
Sandcroft, *Ken*, C. T. (you might have added Bishop
Wren, who forbad the use of all *Conceived Prayer in the*
Church;) Yea, you recur to the *Compilers of the Liturgy, &c.*
All, say you, I *Censure and Condemn*: But where's the *Cen-*
sure and Condemnation? As for the *Compilers*, they were ex-
cellent Persons; and the *Liturgy* I ever thought an excel-
lent Work at that time; but I believe they never
dream't of Posterity's being Confin'd to it, and the Mi-
nisters of future Generations, solemnly Obliged to use
no other in publick Prayer and administration of Sacraments;
when Able Ministers should so abound, that two Thou-
sand of 'em at once, could, *you think*, well be spared.
But because the Martyrs rejoiced in some broken Pie-
ces and bad Translations of the Scripture, must we not
Correct 'em? At the first coming out of Popery, we
should have thought the *Bohemian Cup* at the *Sacrament*,
or the *Mass* in *English*, to be an high Attainment; but
to acquiesce herein and stick here for near two Centu-
ries of *Evangelical Light*, would be but a slow Progress
in Reformation.

As for your Bishop *Ken*, I did not call him Bishop,
and that because I know no *Diocess* he has, or what
Place or Station he holds in the present Church; I ac-
count

count the present Bishop no *Intruder*; Do you think all your Brethren are of the same Opinion? Tho still to that Unfortunate Gentleman's, or any others *Parts and Piety*, I can and shall pay a due Deference. And to make you amends, let it be, for the future, The late Bishop *Ken*; for excuse me from using your Dialect, Bishop *Ken*, as if there were *Right* or *Rival* in the case; unless it must be plain King *James* too, without any other Addition, which, I am told, Judges think highly Criminal in many Cases.

Passing over then your false and scurrilous Reflections, as if I had *usurped an Authority of Censuring* all, and leaving you to hug your self in the fancied Honour of such Non-jurors Company, who disdain yours. You tell me, That *all this Noise and Confidence, is grounded on some crude and indigested Notions of Mr. Baxter, Answered an Hundred times, by many Learned Men.* Then any body will say, you can Answer 'em once; But, who of your *Learned Men* have Answered his Book of *Episcopacy*, or his *English Nonconformity Stated and Argued*? And for your self, have you ever read 'em? No, 'tis your constant Talk, That the Non-conformists are a company of silly Animals, scarce worth the Contempt of such as you, who for Dictating and Hectoring, will be Famous in your Generation.

You say indeed; I never read yours, but my Study runs on a *pauntry sort of Divinity, only calculated for a Conventicle.* I was thinking on these words, when our Pulpits and Seats were made a Common Bonfire; when our Doors were broken, and Houses and Studies Searched and Risted, whether your honest Friends the Informers, could give you any Intelligence what Authors we were Conversant with, and in what sort of Studies we employ'd our time. I suppose you are of the mind of a Brother of yours (who hath writ for Conformity) whose Saying I have somewhere met with, That *that's the best Divinity*, that enables a Man for two or three

good Livings, or to keep a Coach and six Horses. However, it shall highly please us, if it pleases God, by that Divinity which you call *Paultry*, and the Preaching you call *Foolishness*, To save those that believe, 1 Cor. I. 21.

You next come to what concerns your self in my Papers, and this you say, are some wise Reflections on your Visitation Sermon, * and a Fling now and then in a Conventicle, to Antidote my deluded People against the Poyson of it.

* *Why that which next follows in his letter to me, viz. Which past the Approbation of the Bishop, and was Printed at his Command, should be left out in the Print, is a Mystery I must leave the Reader to Unriddle: That what he hath kept in, viz. That it past the Approbation of all the Clergy there present, I doubt himself, I'm sure others know to be false.*

A. Yes, doubtless you know very well what is done in Conventicles, (by which, if you mean *Illegal Assemblies*, since ours are protected and Allowed by the same Authority as yours are Established, you Arraign the Government.) But, truly Sir, 'twas not because I did not Dare, but because I had no need to Answer those Passages in your Sermon: For finding the Poyson of 'em so weak, that the natural healthful Constitution of such as I Convers'd with, was able to overcome it, I let them alone without any Publick Recipe.

But you ask, *What I have against your Sermon? Why, (First) That it calls our Praying in publick without a Form, by the Reproachful Name of Extempore Effusions.*

A. If it calls our Praying in Publick, without a Form so, I suppose it must yours too; and there are not a few of the best of the Clergy of England that do so, as you know: Now, did you take it upon you to Censure and Condemn them, or no? But you would know whether it be not so call'd by all Learned Men, who have occasion to speak or write of it, who yet have no mind to reproach, but Reform our Devotion.

A. It

A. It seems then, you have got a Patent to monopolize all Learning, and are resolv'd, none shall have any, but such as speak your Sentiments; else methinks it wou'd be no difficulty to Convince you in this matter: And, I'll not descend so low as B. D. but mention some D. D's and Bishops for this end; Dr. *Reinolds*, Dr. *Lightfoot*, Dr. *Wallis*, &c. were of the Commissioners, who stil'd it, *The Exercise of the Gift of Prayer*. Bishop *Hall* calls it, *Conceiv'd Prayer*, and from present Conceptions, and that not to *Reproach*, no, nor to *Reform*, but to *Recommend* such *Devotion*. He tells us, that *All Christian Divines have ever had this Liberty in all the Churches*. (Of which, more, Letter 19.) Bishop *Wilkins*, 'tis known, wrote of it under another Notion, and gave it another Name, telling us, 'Tis a fault and shame, for Ministers to be without this Gift; and that the using *Reproachfully* the milder Expression of *Extempore Prayer*, is for the most part a sign of a *Prophane Heart*, and such as are altogether strangers from the Power and Comfort of this Duty. I mention none of the Dissenting Doctors; but one would not think, you should be so stingy, as not to allow a little Learning to the other.

But you insist on't, and must have our Prayers Penn'd, or they are *Extempore Effusions*, or pour'd out of a sudden, and so are a *Reproach* to such as use 'em.

A. I thought every one had known there was a *Medium*, viz. Excogitating suitable Matter, (from the General and Special Rule of Direction) and Method, yea, and Words too, as we commonly Practise. We are most of Bishop *Wilkins's* Mind and Way, who blames both Extreams, viz. *Confining wholly to Set Forms*; (which he compares to *Crutches*) or *depending wholly on sudden Suggestions*. Indeed, you may better say, That we use a Form or Liturgy, in our constant Ministrations; for we ordinarily have the same words extracted from the *Scriptures*, not only in the Blessing, and Singing Psalms, reading Canonical Scripture, (nor the Fictions of *Tobit*,

Bell and the Dragon, Judith's Lie, and such like Apocryphal Stuff; this we leave to you) the same words commonly in Administration of the Sacraments, &c. And there are none that we know of among us, that do expect or pretend to immediate Inspiration, as in your Sermon is Insinuated, or that do exclude Premeditation from this holy Exercise. We account our selves obliged aforehand, to consider the particular Cases and Necessities of those that join with us, as we are capable, and have Opportunity.

Therefore I can't think the Caution of the Wise Man, *Eccles.* 5. 2. which you mention here and elsewhere, will reach the Controversy between us, or in the least concern a Prescribed Form, to the Exclusion of Free-Prayer.

Though I willingly grant, that *the Divine Majesty is to be approach'd with the Profoundest Awe and Reverence*; and our Expressions are not to be multiplied without suitable Affections, which in our Prayers we should Exercise and Inflame; yet of this we are perswaded, That the Almighty hath, in this Age, a great multitude of Suppliants, that can and do express holy Desires Understandingly, Orderly, Seriously, Aptly, without any Penn'd or Prescribed Form; and that Ministers should ordinarily be able to do so too; and 'tis pity that all should be forc'd to wear Spectacles, or use Crutches, because some are Pur-blind, or Lame, or Lazy.

Now that the forecited Scripture is not concerned in this matter, seems plain; Because,
See Mr. Boife's Answer to Bishop King. (1st.) The Care and Caution that our words *be few*, would be rendered Needless, by our Confinement to a Prescrib'd Form; it not being in our Power to Enlarge, or Contract what we say; for the Words are on the Paper or Book before us, and we may not vary from 'em. This were enough, though (2^{dly}.) 'tis thought

thought, that Scripture is properly to be understood of Private Vows in the House of God, v. 4, 5, 6. and not immediately to relate to Prayer, which though it be perform'd in Publick, may be not Hasty, but Hearty; not Rash, but Real and Sincere, and such as a good God shall Accept, and none but ill Men Nauseate.

I know no Impropriety in the words, *Free or Conceiv'd Prayer* (as Bishop Hall.) And as I acknowledge with you, that 'tis a Preposterous Course, (which I have shewn you, is not our Case) to *Conceive and bring forth together*: So to be Ingenuous, you must grant me, 'tis altogether as unheard of (unless the Prince of Wales may be an Instance, who crept into your *Liturgy*) to *bring forth* what you never *Conceived*. And pray tell me in your next, was not that an *Extemporary Effusion*? or such a *Private Conception*, as the Silencing Commissioners at the Savoy, 1661, wish'd of *all Free Prayer*, should be Suppressed? Can you say, that you were of a sudden Inspired, to know whether that were a Real or Pretended Prince? However that be, we bless God, we have liv'd so long as to see it Expung'd out of our Invariable Liturgy. And, is it not a shame to such as you, that a Popish Prince can so easily corrupt it, and our present Rightful Protestant Prince cannot correct it, though he did desire it. I think, Sir, this is much to the Point, and deserves your Consideration.

(2.) You bring me in *Complaining of your Sermon*, for its *Disparaging the Gift of Prayer*, which, you say, is thus Prov'd: It *Disparages the Gift of Extemporary Effusions*, which, it saith, is not the Gift of Prayer, therefore it *Disparageth the Gift of Prayer*. - Here you Triumph, most profound Reasoning! to give your Learned Readers some pleasant Entertainment. But in the mean time, I utterly deny I had these words, or any like 'em; and till you produce 'em, this way of Arguing, as silly as you make it, is no body's but your own.

I proceed next to your Supposition, where you are as unhappy as before; for I dare say, you can't mention one Author of ours that takes the Gift of Prayer, *to consist in the change and Novelty of Words, as a Faculty of talking to God every day in new and varied Phrases.* So that you are guilty of what you just now Accused me of, *viz. Of not reading both sides:* And you may, without any Danger, persist in exposing this Faculty, (as you think it *justly deserves*) which no body interests himself in the Defence of; yet let me tell you, that a much Wiser Man, *viz. Bishop Wilkins,* Commends it, *as in its self very useful,* though he condemns the *too great Affectation* of it; and so do I, and on the same Reason he gives, *viz. Because it may expose to some impertinent Expressions, on which, Profane Men will be apt to take great Advantage, and to confirm themselves in their Prejudices;* which, I hope, you will consider. See *Gift of Prayer, p. 17.*

I applaud your Ingenuity, in recommending to my Perusal a Book so full of Falsities, as the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence;* yet, if you have not seen its Answer, (where you may find a great deal worse, and perhaps more truly reported of the Episcopal Clergy, who had no Liturgy to prevent their Absurdities) I shall be so far from Recommending it to you, that I declare with Bishop King, of *Londonderry,* (how grossly soever he Abuses us in other things) that *I dislike the Exposing any Person's Devotion,* especially when not impos'd on us, *what-ever it is.*

From a False Supposition, you next proceed to a false State of the Question: After which, having like an Ecclesiastical Pædagogues, for a while brandished your menacing Rod, and in the Terms of *Engaging, entering the Lists,* shewn your self a true Son of the New Church Militant, you fall with invincible Courage on proving what no body ever denied, *viz. That the Gift of Prayer does not consist in Words, Expressions, much less in the Change and Variety of 'em.*

I say

I say with Bishop Wilkins, That 'tis a Readiness or an Ability to express in a fitting manner, on all Occasions, the Desires of our Hearts in this Duty, not that 'tis the words themselves.

And now having by an odd mistake of the Question stumbled on the Truth, one wou'd have expected a better Argument to prove it than what follows; *Viz.*

If neither words in General, nor our own words in Particular, are absolutely necessary and essential to the Duty of Prayer: Then the Gift of Prayer cannot be said to consist in 'em,

But neither Words in General, &c.

Ergo, The Gift cannot consist in 'em.

Here as to the Consequence, you suppose I grant it, and you positively tell me * *That only the Minor can be* * Altered in the Print. denied. (More than ordinary Candor indeed, not only to furnish the Argument, but to Dictate the Answer!) And is not this *Profound Reasoning*? Certainly, Sir, you deserve to stand upon Record, as an instance of the deep Learning, and close Reasoning of a Dogmatical Imposing Vicar: (to return one of your own Civilities with little Amendment.) But

I Answer. 1. Here's an *Ignoratio Elenchi*, the Argument not Concluding against me, or any other Non-conformist.

2. I utterly deny the Sequel, because the Duty of Prayer may be, yea often is performed without the Gift; as in a Persons offering up his Desires to God in mental Prayer: If you say such a Person then hath the Gift of Prayer; for the Gift according to you, consists in the Pious Motions and good Affections of the heart:

I An-

I *Answer*. But who do's not see this to be a Palpable *Petitio Principii*, or begging of the Question ? for this is the very thing in Debate between us, which one who Affects to be a Rational Divine should not have taken for granted.

As for your *Minor*, 'tis true of mental or secret Prayer, but false of Family or Publick Prayer, which must be Vocal, and of which our Dispute is.

Yet do not the Scriptures you mention reach our Controversy, or they decide it against you : For *Hannah's* Lips mov'd, 1 *Sam.* 1. 13. though *Eli* heard not her Voice ; which if compared with *v.* 16. seems plainly to imply that she used a Voice, though not Audible by the *good Old man*.

Concerning your two newly added Scriptures, I must say, you have an Excellent Gift of Perverting them, and flatly Contradicting your Self. For the former I may shew afterwards ; for the latter, let any sensible Reader judge, by Comparing this your 9th Page with the 141st. There, you say, *It appears from these two Scriptures, viz. Zech. 12. 10. and Rom. 8. 26. That the Spirit did Inspire both the Matter and Words of Prayer ; Here you say, that the Spirit of Supplication hath no Relation to words and outward Expressions ; and that St. Paul sets forth the Assistance which the Spirit of God gives in Prayer, not by helping to utter or express any thing with the Tongue ; and is not this a most Apparent Contradiction ?*

On the whole, you having taken such pains to no purpose to prove that *Prayer may be performed without any words*, you might have superseded farther Labour to prove that it *might be without our own*. But your main Concern was to have better supported the Sequel of your *Major*, before you had Concluded with a *which was the thing to be Proved*.

I have Received your 2d Letter ; and in due time it shall not fail of an Answer ; But my other Occasions

ons will Oblige me to go my own Pace. I have other things to desire Satisfaction in, especially the Evidence *that Popish Emissaries Introduced into these Kingdoms Extempore Prayer, &c.* which I mention now, not to divert you from what you are on, but to employ you when you have most Leisure. In the mean time you may be Confident I am, and shall be

S I R,

March 20.
1696

Your Unfeigned Friend
and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER II.

To Mr. H—

S I R,

THat when you had Rambled out of your way in your first *Letter*, you shou'd get into it in your *Second*, or keep in it in the Rest; I had no more Reason to Expect, than that an Error in the first *Concoction* should be amended in the *Second*.

The Subject matter of our Debate is, *The Gift of Prayer*; the Occasion of it, as you tell the World, in your *Preface*, is, *some Passages in your Sermon*; this therefore we must have respect to, if we Design to keep to the Purpose in stating the Question. There you are informing your Brethren what are not, and what are, the most Beneficial *Gifts for the Use of the Church*; that formerly there was an *Extraordinary Gift of Prayer*—but now there remains no other in the Church, than Pious Moti-

ons

ons. — You speak throughout only of Publick Prayer, so that meer *Mental Prayer* is excluded our Controversy, and we have nothing to do with that: Our whole Dispute is concerning that which is Vocal; and so the Question rightly stated is this, Whether an Ability of Expressing our selves, suitably and readily to GOD in Prayer; or as others, An Ability of Chusing suitable Matter of Prayer, and offering it up to GOD in Expressions fit to represent the good Affections of our Hearts on all Occasions, be, or may be call'd, the Gift of Publick, Ministerial (which is always *Vocal*) Prayer? Or whether only *the Pious Motions and Elevations of the Heart to GOD must have that Name*? The former you say is *my Opinion*, which you spend so much waste Breath and Ink to Confute; the latter is your own, which you endeavour to confirm; and then talk of the Consequences of *both*, as matters of vast Importance; whereas any one may see, that the whole Controversy, as you manage it, is only one *Grand Excursion* from the beginning to the end of all your Letters; or to give it the softest Term, a mere *Lis de Nomine*, or Contest about a Word. Now, how idle is it, thus to Erect your Batteries, to scribble on, only to beat me from a Word, that Vulgar Use hath long since stamp'd a Currency upon? Yea, what Fault, if I had first us'd the *Gift of Prayer* in my own sense, immediately explaining my meaning, and ever after to prevent Confusion, substituting these words for the same *Idea*; since, as I thought you had known, *Nominal Definitions are Arbitrary*: But I see no Original Impropriety, any more than want of Use in the same sense, to invalidate my Acceptation of *the Gift of Prayer*.

But let's see how you Argue; *We may pray Acceptably to GOD without any Words, as mentally; and without our own Words, as in Godly Forms; and without new and varied Words, as in stated Liturgies: Ergo, The Gift of Prayer can't consist in any Faculty of Expressions.* *Ans.* But is

is the Consequence tolerable, That because we may pray mentally without Words, therefore the *Gift of Publick Vocal Prayer* is not an Ability of suitable Expressions in Praying? And though (for my part I doubt not but) many may, and do, as you say; *pray Acceptably to G O D in Godly Forms, and stated Liturgies*, yet what hinders but that a Readiness to express our Case suitably to G O D our selves, may be called the *Gift of Prayer*? Doubtless you are as confident, that a man may preach acceptably by Godly stated Homilies, and yet the Gift of Preaching may lye in an Ability to compose good Sermons, and deliver 'em in such a manner as is most for the Advantage of the Hearers: For I presume you wou'd not say, That man has a good Gift in preaching, that can only stutter out a Sermon prepared to his hands, but Composes none. But though I deny your Sequel, you think it firm and undeniable, because *the Gift of Prayer must extend to all sorts of Prayer, else 'tis not the Gift of Prayer in General.* *Answ.* And who says it is? I'm sure you your self speak only of the *Gift of Prayer in the Church*, and against that Gift which hath made *Schisms and Confusions in the Church*: But this is more fully Answered afterward.

But you think it sufficiently *Aburd to Affirm, That there is an Acceptable Way of Praying, without the Gift of Prayer.* *Answ.* But may there not be an *Acceptable way of Praying* mentally, without the Gift of Vocal Prayer?

You wonder I can't discern 'twixt the Gift of Speech, Utterance, and Elocution, which is applicable to any Subject or Occasion, and the Gift of Prayer. But *Admiratio est Ignorantis*: That I have by my Description of the Gift of Prayer sufficiently distinguished these two, Appears plainly; for,

There are many who have an Ability of Expressing their Desires readily and suitably to G O D in Prayer, that have no such Readiness of Elocution on other Occasions: Therefore there is a Difference 'twixt your Gift of Elocution, applicable

to any other Occasion, and the Gift of Prayer in my Sense of it. For the Proof of the Antecedent, I need only Appeal to Experience, if not yours, yet to many others.

You say I might as well take a Lawyer's Volubility in Pleading, for the Gift of Tongues; (But what Sense is this? if he can plead in English, that therefore he can in Greek and Hebrew too :) &c. as a Fluency of Words about our Wants, and the supply of 'em, for the Gift of Prayer; the Life and Soul of which lies in the Inward Desires and Devotions of the Heart. But I see not the least Parity in these Instances; only they may serve to Demonstrate your own Inconsistency, who place the Extraordinary Gift of Prayer in the same Fluency of Words, and yet the Life and Soul of that too, and of all Prayer, lies in the Inward Desires and Devotions of the Heart.

I am not more willing to learn, than I see you are to teach, therefore you say, before you conclude your Argument, you'll leave this short Remark for my Edification; (which is an handsome Period, and well worth the Transcribing) The Use of Words is to inform, the End of many words is to persuade, of new words to please; the first affects the Mind, the second the Passions, the third the Fancy. — Now none of these are of any Use in our Addresses to GOD; (and you add the Reason) for GOD is not to be inform'd by any words, nor persuaded by many, nor pleas'd by new. Well! and so say we too; But what then? Must we not therefore pray with any words, may we not with many, or with new? And in Experience, don't we see you need many and new Words, as well as pious Motions on several Occasions? And if there were no farther Gift of Prayer now remaining in the Church, what adapted words should we have, to signify the good Affections of our Hearts towards the Glorious Preserver of our Rightful King William from Intended Assassinations, French Invasions, Jacobinist Insurrections, or Preparations? But you say, these things

things may do much with Men, who are wont to be wrought upon this way, but they have no force or efficacy at all with GOD; and 'tis to frame unworthy Notions of him, to think he is delighted with new Phrases, and variety of Expressions. This is indeed very Edifying, but we knew it before; we do not draw the Bank to the Boat; how e're it seems, but the Boat to it; 'tis not to bring GOD over to our Interests, but to bring us up to his Terms; and because sometimes not a few, yea, new Words do much with Men to affect 'em, and dispose their Hearts for the Mercies begg'd, therefore we account 'em more Eligible than the old ones; or can you seriously think that GOD is more delighted with your old Words and Phrases, and the same Expressions, if there be not a true Heart, and a new Life? Or who saith that GOD is taken with words, either Old or New? I have been sometimes imagining, what shou'd be the Reason, that some disaffected Clergy-men and their Adherents, seem strangely elevated, whilst they are using or alternately Rehearsing the old Phrases and Expressions; but on Days of Humiliation, when the Nation hath been engaged to pray for the King's Preservation, for the Fleets and Armies Successes; and on Days of Thanksgiving for the King's Return and Safety, both which are solemniz'd with several new Words and Phrases, what a sensible Damp is there on their Devotions? To prevent the Observation of which, several stay off, and turn the Fasts into Festivals, and the Thanksgivings into Humiliations; may not these Men of Sense be under the Influence of this Modern Rational Divinity that GOD is not delighted in new Words, and they are resolv'd to keep their old good Affections? All the Gift of Prayer that they know of, or delight in, is in old Words, and Inward Desires (some wou'd add) of something, which I hope and pray they'll never be heard in. If this be an Excursion, 'tis a venial one, and scarce needs, or will easily obtain your Pardon.

By

By this time, you tell me, you fear, that mine (or rather Bishop Wilkins's) *Notion of the Gift of Prayer may begin to totter*, (though where the strength of the Argument level'd against it lies, no body I believe hath yet seen or felt.) Yet if I'll be obedient to your Dictates, it seems I must throw away an Argument or two to support my Opinion, which your trifling tells me is in danger of falling; though it looks ridiculous enough to require any other prop, or reason for the use of a Word beside vulgar Acceptation, yet I'll offer you two:

1. *Arg.* If the Words themselves whereby we express our selves to GOD in Prayer, may be, and are commonly termed Prayer, then an Ability or Faculty of expressing our selves well or suitably, may properly be stild the Gift of that Prayer.

But the Words 'emselfes whereby we express our selves to GOD in Prayer, may be and commonly are stiled Prayer: *Ergo*, An Ability or Faculty of Expressing our selves well or suitably, may properly be stiled the Gift of that Prayer.

The Sequel of the *Major* I prove from your own words, *viz.* *That a Faculty of Doing a thing well, is commonly stiled a Talent or Gift of that thing*: *Ergo*,

If the Words 'emselfes may be termed Prayer, the Faculty of wording or expressing our selves well or suitably, is the Gift of that Prayer.

The *Minor* I prove thus; When a man is said to rehearse the *L O R D's Prayer*, or to read *Common Prayer*, the meaning is, that he rehearses or reads the words of those Prayers, (not that he hath any *Pious Motions* or good *Affections*.) So the Hypocrites have their Prayers, and the Prayers of the Wicked (surely not their *Pious Motions*) are said to be an *Abomination*:

Ergo,

Ergo, The words themselves, whereby we express our selves to GOD in Prayer, may be stiled Prayer.

2. *Arg.* If an Inspired Ability of Expressing our Desires suitably might be called a Gift Extraordinary of Praying in the Beginning of Christianity; then an Acquir'd Ability of Expressing Desires suitably, may be called an Ordinary Gift of Prayer now.

But the former is true: *Ergo*, the Latter.

The Sequel is Evident, for Extraordinary and Ordinary are Differences that alter not the Genus, but distribute it into its Species.

The *Minor*, whatever it be in it self, is your own, as may evidently be Collected from the 10th and 11th Pages of your Visitation Sermon:

These may serve to sustain this Notion of the Gift of Prayer: Let's next see what you have to underprop your own, viz. *That it is in the Pious Motions and good Affections of the Heart: And here your Comfort is, That you have the General Concurrence of the most Judicious and Pious Divines on your Side, so that you are like to stand or fall with good Company: Who they are you won't vouchsafe to tell, but Judicious and Pious Bishop Wilkins, and those other Great Episcopal Divines mention'd in my former Letter are none of the Number.*

I shall therefore immediately proceed to try the *Firmness* of the Ground whereon your Notion stands, defended by these two Arguments.

1. *Arg.* *That which best enables to the Right Performance of the Duty of Prayer, that is properly the Gift of Prayer:*

But the Inward Pious Motions and good Affections of the Soul do best enable to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer: Ergo,

The Divine Art or Gift of Prayer lies principally in the Pious Motions and Affections of the Heart.

Answer 1st. Here are several words prest into Service in the Conclusion, that offered not themselves Volunteers in the Premisses ; as [*the Divine Art*] that looks a little more favourably on you : Besides [*principally*] instead of [*properly,*] so that this Syllogism is not the truest as to Form.

Answer 2d. By Retortion : *First.* The vanity of Dogmatizing, Ostentation of Parts, Ambition of being a Dictator to the World, &c. may best enable a Man to Scribble Endlessly : *Ergo,*

These are the Gift of Scribbling Endlessly.

Secondly, The Spirit of GOD, and his Graces, as Faith, Repentance, Humility, *do best enable to the Right Performance of the Duty of Prayer :* *Ergo,*

These are the Gift of Prayer : Is this Conclusive ?

3dly, I Answer. 1. Directly to the Major ; *That which best Enables to the Right* (that is, the most Devout and Acceptable, with respect to GOD) *performance of the Duty of Prayer* is properly the Special Gift, Grace, or Spirit of Prayer ; *Transcat :* The common Gift, usually term'd Gift Simply ; of which you print, and I speak, I Deny.

Or *2dly* to the Minor : The Inward Pious Motions and Affections *do best enable* to the Theologically right Performance of the Duty, *i. e.* the Internal part of Prayer : *Let it pass :* To the Artificially right Performance of the External part of Prayer, I deny.

As for Example, in the Instance of Singing, I wou'd fain have leave to say, a Man has a Talent or Gift in, or of Singing, that being well acquainted with that Art, can module his Voice to every Note in a Regular manner ; and yet they are the pious Motions of the Heart *that do best enable us to the Right Performance of this Duty ;* If I understand [*aright*] Theologically, or such as alone renders Acceptable to GOD, to whom *non vox, sed*
coram,

votum, &c. but not if I speak only of an Artificial Resemblance: Thus it is here. After all, 'twere Answer enough to this Argument, to remind you, that all this while you are vindicating your Sermon that treats of *Vocal Prayer*, which as such is aright Perform'd when we Exercise our Ability of suitable Expressions to GOD in that Duty, though good Affections are a good help to Dictate such Expressions.

Your Second Argument is, *That which best Answers the End of Prayer, and tends most to the Success and Acceptance of it, that's most properly the Gift of it; But the Inward hearty Desires of the Soul, best Answer the End of Prayer, and tend most to the Success and Acceptance of it: Ergo,*
The Divine Art, or Gift of Prayer resides chiefly within, and consists in the Pious Motions and good Affections of the Heart.

I Answer (1st.) Here besides your Addition [*Resides chiefly within*], *The Divine Art* intrudes into the Conclusion without leave of the Premises, as before. For though I grant every good Art in a sense to be Divine, as it hath GOD for its Author; and the Gift of Prayer to be so, as having besides, GOD for its Object, yet I Insist on your observing of the Terms; because by a *Divine Art* you seem to Insinuate that we are Disputing concerning the *Grace and Spirit of Supplication*, when indeed it's only of the *Common Ministerial Gift*.

2d Answer. By Retortion, *That which best Answers the End of Prayer, and tends most to the Success and Acceptance of it, that's most properly the Gift of it.*

But the Intercession of our Redeemer best Answers the End of Prayer, and tends most to the Success and Acceptance of it; Ergo, 'Tis most properly the Gift of Prayer.

3d Answer. Directly, The Major may be Absolutely denied; and what you bring to put it out of

Doubt, has without doubt no force at all in it: For *He that prays most successfully, say you, may be supposed to be best endowed with the Gift of it.*

Answer. *He is indeed better endowed with the Gift of praying successfully, than he that prays without any Success; but not always with the Gift of that Prayer, concerning which our Controversy is, and I am weary of Repeating.*

These are the Arguments you so triumph on, and so often reiterate; which having Answer'd, I need not propose any of my own for a further Confutation. 'Tis evident to any who Considers, that you have very loosely stated your Notion: Sometimes you call the *Inward Desires of the Heart the Gift*, (which yet you say is a *Faculty*) of *Prayer*; sometimes you say, they are the *Life and Soul of Prayer*, or *Prayer it self*; and yet neither are the *Desires* 'emselfs *Prayer*, but the offering of 'em up to GOD.

Besides, Have not Pious Men the *Gift of Prayer* when they are asleep, and have no *Desires*? How then can the good *Desires of the Soul be the Gift of Prayer*?

Finally, Both your Arguments are as Conclusive against your self, as me; you Grant there *was an Extraordinary Gift of Prayer* distinct from *Pious Motions, &c.* and yet 'twas as true of these *Motions* formerly, as 'tis now, *that they best enable to the right performance of the Duty, and tend most to the Success of it*: What shall be done with a Man of such Inconsideration, and Inconsistency?

Having Dispatch'd the Argumentative part, you come to Application, which uses to be the best or worst; and here you'll weigh the *Consequences of Both Opinions*; and on the one hand, you say, that placing the *Gift of Prayer in the Heart, may be a means of setting men upon the stricter Watch over it*; and why so? why hath not the placing the *Grace or Spirit of Prayer in the Heart*.

as proper an Influence to make us *Watchful* over it, and keep us close to the Duty?

Next you'll tell me some of the many *Mischiefs* that have proceeded from this *Verbal Gift of Prayer*: To all which you have a full Answer in what follows.

(1st.) Don't most of these *Mischievous Consequences* proceed from the Exercise of this Gift in Secret and Family Prayers? Can the Mind attend to two or more things at once in these? Mayn't Men be Conceited of their Performances in these? &c. and yet you say that the use of Free and Conceiv'd Prayer in Private is a Pious and Excellent Practice, p. 185. When the Poles meet, such Contradictions may be Reconcil'd; yet we shall have more of 'em afterward.

(2^{dly}.) I can easily grant you there have been Abuses in this as in every way of praying, which if rack'd together may (as a Conformist faith) furnish out matter enough for a Satyr, and employ any that can rail in various Words and Phrases; Men may butt 'em-selves with God's Gifts, and turn their Remedy to their Ruin; Men may be proud of their New Words as Children of their New Clothes; (yea, so do many Elder abuse their Old ones as an Excuse for their prophane neglect of GOD's Publick Worship:) But if the Abuses may lay an Embargo on the Use, what Prayers of any sort will be left us, or what will become of the Common-Prayer it self, because many have made as wretched work with that as ever was made of Free Prayer, sullying it more by their Conversation, than their Fingers? You know, Sir, there are not a few, that wou'd resent it heavily, and as a most Tyrannical Imposition, to be tyed up from meddling (for Instance) with a Bottle of Wine, because it hath Occasion'd (as you say in this Case) a very great Giddiness, and produc'd many such bad Effects, &c. Therefore,

(3^{dly}.) A Wise man wou'd see on both sides, and wou'd not Split on one Rock, whilst he seems cautious of the other; nor go about to Cure an Accidental Inconvenience by a Stated Mischief; 'tis Confest, all that such as we do, is Imperfect, even our best Prayers; but to Expel the Church, or to expose to the World this Gift of Prayer is no proper Medium to heal us; no, 'tis holding the Balances by an Impartial hand to try which do preponderate, either the Conveniences or Inconveniences of a Form or Free Prayer, that's like to do it. In the mean time let's see what are the Consequences of your Opinion.

First, If now there remains no other Gift of Prayer in the Church; — Now, when Publick Prayers are Compos'd; Then there's an End of Free Prayer, or praying according to various Occasions: and then how can we comply with the Divine Will? *Phil. 4. 6. in every thing to make known our Requests to God.* Publick Forms must of necessity float in Generals; The Occurrences of human Life are so various that this way a particular Cognizance can't be taken of 'em; and for all Ministers to be confined thus, there are Scores of Thousands in *England* will believe no Inconsiderable Inconvenience.

Secondly, This Magnifying one Form, and Admitting no other in Publick Prayer, hath occasion'd many weak Peoples Idolizing it as if dropt from Heaven, Dictated by Inspiration, to be part of what *Timothy* Compos'd by *Paul's* Direction, or else deriv'd down from *St. Peter's* Liturgy, &c. as if those words were a Charm, and no other Acceptable; this hath made many vilify Preaching, as meer Talking; and all other Prayer as *Spiritual Frenzy*, and *Enthusiasm*.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Suppose that you and one or two Companions shou'd compose a Form, and expect that none in a Kingdom shou'd Speak to GOD in Publick Prayer, but according to your Dictates and Prescriptions, wou'd not this speak your Extraordinary Humility?

Fourthly, It tends to work the People to a meer Outside heartless kind of Service; which (as *Mr. Baxter saith*) is as great an Enemy to Peoples Devotion, and Salvation, as almost any thing in the World: Experience Convinces of this, how hard it is for a man to keep up Life and Seriousness, in the constant Hearing or Speaking of the same words. Do but preach your Sermon fifty times in a Year, and your Auditors won't give you Thanks for it.

Fifthly, It opens the Door to a Lazy Ministry, especially in a juncture when Discipline is not or cannot be Exercis'd. It tends to reduce all the Publick Ministrations to reading Liturgies and Homilies; and then (*saith vox Populi*) If GOD Almighty wou'd but send a man a good pair of Eyes, or in Case he don't do that, a Fescue and a pair of Spectacles, he might e'en keep the Gifts of his Spirit to himself, for any need that a Clergyman may have of 'em. When Ministers know the publick Duty requires no Exercise of their Invention, and that they may before Men come off in reading a Prayer, as well without any regard to their Hearts as with the greatest Seriousness of Devotion, what can be expected but that they will do accordingly?

Sixthly, The Restraining this Gift, and Confining to a Form, hath been, and is a Certain Engine of Division ever since the Reformation, and ever will be so. Of this, *Scotland* is an Undeniable Instance, where there are no Impositions of this Nature, and fewer Sectaries than, it may be, in any Reformed

Church on Earth. You may expect the proof of these
from

S I R,

April 1. 1697.

Your Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER III.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

TO my Answer you Reply in two Letters, of which I may say, that how Confusedly soever you both Print, and Write of *the Gift of or in Prayer*, you have the Gift, or Talent of Scribling, Impertinently, Imperiously, and Perpetually, of all the Men-I know.

The First of these is filled with many Words for my Conviction, and a few for my Edification and Instruction.

The First is to Convince, or *make me Sensible of my Excursions* from the *Question about the Gift of Prayer*; and what was all the former part of your *Letter* then, but *Excursions*, which those, you call mine, were only in Answer to? And if you thought it too Impertinent to deserve an Answer, you might yet tamely have borne the Honour-I did you, in waiting on you to the Argument. I thought I might have wiped off some Aspersions whilst you were whetting your Tool of a Tongue (as the Rhinocerot his Tooth) in order to a Battel, &c. Could you reasonably expect such Calumnies should be overpast without any Reflections; or that I should Confess

fel's my self guilty of the Abuses you falsly charg'd me with, and all in meer Deference to your Dictates; and because you had us'd so much Verity in the one, and Gravity in the other? But if ever you grow to be *jure Divino* my Diocesan, you may then with more Reason expect a submiss Regard to your *strict Charges*; now I hope 'tis no Capital Crime, when I see cause, to neglect 'em, though you nauseously repeat 'em over and over again: But, Sir, let me give you a Charge too, that is, to Speak and Write Truth, a Competent Regard to which would have par'd off a great deal of this Frivolous Letter. And I would seriously know what Account you give to your own Conscience or Credit, for the many Falsities, and Misrepresentations of my Words in this, and the Rest of your Letters; and I must leave it to the Unbiass'd Reader to judge, what Occasion I gave you for 'em. If your Bishop T. thought Officious Lyes lawful, will you prove Joseph's ones to be so too? And making the Reader believe that I say this, and Query that, when I did neither, make a mock of Sin, whilst you make mirth with my (pretended) Excursions.

No doubt but your Facetiousness is to some Readers a grateful Diversion; but I can no more Applaud it here, than I can take that for the best Sermon, that makes the worst part of the Auditory most Sport.

But let us see how you proceed for my Conviction: You find me, you say, *running this way, and the other*, &c. You Dream, Sir, without doubt that the Golden Age is return'd, and that you have got a Pack of Informers again at your Heels; for what else should make you such a terrible Scarecrow to the *Nonconformists*? But let 'em run into *Devon* or where they will, they deserve to be begg'd for Fools, if they run into France to King James; for that would be well the way to escape you, who a thousand to one would make much better Heels in that Progress. That I ran into France

France to tell King James to his Face, that he can only be call'd the late King, but he must not think to call himself so now; is so Nonsensical, that having altered in the Print, I believe you are asham'd of.

That I say, because Bishop Ken may have some good in him, I am content to call him the late Bishop Ken, is not true.

Shortly hereupon, you say, I put the Question, Whether a Conventicle be an Unlawful Assembly. Where did I put this Question? But you must add here half a Page to introduce this Falshood, and to give your Answer to it, which is worse than none.

But I Reply, whilst Laws were in force to vex and persecute, to Fine forty Pounds for a Sermon, to drive five Miles from Burroughs and Corporations, to banish Protestants on a Law made against Papists, hanging 'em for Non-Abjuration of, or returning to their Native Country, jailing 'em for Life on Excommunications, a hundred Pounds penalty for Administering the LORD's Supper;—when you made all these Desolations you thought you preserv'd Unity in the Bond of Peace. But when our wise and gentle Governors have relax'd the Severity of these Laws, and by Law allowed our Assemblies, and that with a Design to unite us in Interest and Affection; now they are near about as lawful, as breaking the Bond of Wedlock by Adultery.

You will afterward in your 10th and 11th Letters extol mightily as wise and wholesome, Righteous and Reasonable, those Laws that enabled you to Devour your Brethren; but now if our Peaceable Assemblies are permitted, *'tis just as Moses's Bill of Divorce*. What's this, but to Insinuate, that the taking the Whip out of your Hands is as Criminal in our Governors, as if they granted Licenses for Publick Stews, and protected Adulterers in the Violation of their Marriage Covenant? Is this your Loyalty, who have so
many

many Priviledges, such great Revenues, and your Brethren have only a naked unmolested Liberty? To return you here one of your Queries hereafter, have not you a fine Conceit of your self, thus to reflect on your Governors? That you are resolv'd to be out of Humour, if they order matters otherwise than you would have 'em? 'Twas, Sir, the Hardness of your Hearts, that gave our Governors the first Convictions of the Goodness of this Indulgence: Your Cruelty made the Bill of Divorce 'twixt us, and our beloved People; and our Rulers Kindness, has given us the Liberty of reassuming 'em, as Men to chuse their Wives, which is a Priviledge no Powers of the Earth can well deny 'em.

That I tell you to the Catalogue of Bishops under Censure I can add many (you write,) more (you print,) is (both) untrue; yet you say there's no Doubt I can add more, when in the same Breath you had extended it to all other Bishops before; and is not this Admirably to the Purpose?

So is your Representing me as Damning all the Apocryphal Books, as unworthy to be read by Christians upon any Occasion without the least shew of Truth. I did not wonder at two, or any one thing about the Prince of Wales; but I wonder you'll purchase the Entertainment of your Friends at so dear a Rate, as the Forfeiture of your Truth here also. I did wish indeed you had told me, whether that were an Extemporany Effusion; to which you here add, as if he had Crept into free Prayer too. But I think you can't Produce two of the two thousand Non-Conformists, that used any Petition of that Nature, among their other Crude and Indigested ones, which you charge 'em with. And does not this Instance convince us, that Crude things may be introduced by the Subtily of Romish Emissaries, into the best Liturgy at this Day extant in the Christian World? And does it not now plainly appear to be an Invention to entail Slavery and Ruin upon Protestants, as their Inheritance?

heritance? If this needs, I must beg your pardon here again, *hoping (with you, p. 51.) that these Excursions may wholly wear off in time, though you gravely tell me, such an Inveterate Habit can't be cur'd presently.*

Next you Expostulate with me, *Are not these Excursions, or rather plain running away, and the loss of a Battel, and betaking your self to your Heels? And can you think, say you, that I'll run all the Kingdom over after you, and out of the Kingdom too, and cross the Seas too?* No, Sir, by no means, we can't want such a Grave Divine; 'twould be almost as Fatal to the Church to lose such a Champion for a new Notion, as to part with one of her three significant Ceremonies. But I hope yet there is no such Danger; as you may still find me where I was; so if you are rambled in your pretended pursuit *out of the World*, 'tis only into *Stokegurfey*.

(2.) You have a few Words for my Edification: And here my great Unhappiness, you say, is, that I can't Discern 'twixt the Gift of Speech, and the Gift of Prayer; (now I have by an Appeal to Common Experience intimated sufficiently a Difference in my last.) And that instead thereof I distinguish between the Gift, and Grace of Prayer. *Ans.* 'Tis true I do, between the Grace or Spirit of Prayer, and the Common Gift of vocal ministerial Prayer, of which you still forget the Controversy is; and am I singular here?

Well! but you'll prove that the Terms are Identical by this short Argument,

The Gift of any thing is a Faculty of doing any thing aright, As I prov'd in my last;

(It should have been, *as I said in my last*, but as indeed it did not need it, so you never prov'd it). Now do but apply this to Prayer, say you, then the Gift of Prayer will be a Faculty of performing the Duty of Prayer aright. Yes, of the Prayer of which we are speaking, to which Words are absolutely necessary, understand-
ing

ing [*aright*] as in my last explain'd. And then, you add, tell me whether the Grace of Prayer be any thing else, than an Ability of the right performance of that Duty? I have told you already, that 'tis nothing else, but an Ability of Spiritually, Devoutly, performing the Internal part of the Duty, as what is generally call'd the Gift is of the External.

So that the longer I Con (as you command me in your Letter) *this Lesson*, the less I am *Edified*, and the more I am *Convinced*, that all you have said hitherto is but one entire *Excursion*. But I might expect greater matters from you in your next, which shall also briefly be examin'd by,

S I R,

Your Friend and Servant,

April 1. 1697.

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER IV.

To Mr. H——.

S I R,

AFTER you have talk'd of *weeding* my Letter, and *carrying out the Rubbish*, with other such Preliminaries in your last, I should have thought you would have attempted something to the Purpose here: But a great part of this Letter is stuff'd with the same sort of Rhetorick, *viz. Though you warn me never so oft, and point to the very Place, yet I do fly off in spite of your Teeth, and like an Eel slip away when you think to hold me fastest*: But yet like a Gentleman of admirable

ble Patience, you *won't utterly despair*, but you'll try again, and have the same Words over and over.

Here you'll once more state the Question; and indeed you need do no more: Your first Argument being lost, let's try whether you are not as unhappy in your next and new Essay, (for a Reply 'tis none.)

You'll now prove, That the Gift of Prayer is not an *Ability of expressing our selves suitably to God in Prayer on all Occasions*; thus:

If the Duty of Prayer may be perform'd without an Ability of Expressions, then the Gift of Prayer cannot consist in an Ability of Expressions:

But, &c.

Ergo,

Here to omit your Corrections, and prevent Repetitions as much as may be, where a quarter of what hath been said, is enough to direct any indifferent Reader to a sufficient Reply; let me pass to the proof of your *Minor*:

He that wants a Tongue, bath no Ability of Expressions, yet may perform the Duty of Prayer:

But sure such a man would not be the fittest to be the Mouth of any, but a Quakers Silent Congregation, in this Duty. Was it indeed this *Praying without a Tongue*, of which you told your Brethren in your Sermon, that *there now remains no other Gift of Prayer in the Church, than in Pious Motions, &c.*? Into what Imperinencies do you stumble, through your not heeding what you write? So that your *Minor* stands very Infirm, and 'tis easy to get out there. Nor has the *Sequel* of your *Major* any better Support in the following Proof, *That, without which the Duty of Prayer may be perform'd, cannot be the Gift of Prayer:*

Therefore, &c.

Which I shall only make speak to the purpose, and then leave any one to judge of the Strength or Sense of it;

That

That without which the Duty of (mere Mental) Prayer may be perform'd, cannot be the Gift of (Publick Ministerial Vocal) Prayer. Excellently well!

Therefore, if the Duty of Mental Prayer may be perform'd without an Ability of Expressions, the Gift of Vocal Prayer can't lye in it. Now whether he that denies, or he that makes and believes this Antecedent, deserves more to be Pitied, I think is easy to determine. But you'll help me to a Pair of your Spectacles (how badly soever you can spare 'em) to discern the Truth of it, viz. by this Argument:

If the Gift of Prayer (viz. in the Church) be the Power or Ability of (the Right) performing the Act or Duty of (Ministerial Vocal) Prayer, then the Duty of (mere Mental) Prayer cannot be perform'd without the (abovesaid) Gift of Prayer. This I deny.

But the Gift of Prayer (in Controversy) is the Power or Ability of (the Right) performing the Act or Duty of (mere Mental) Prayer. This is also denied, for 'tis the Ability of performing the Act or Duty of Publick Prayer.

Therefore the Act or Duty (of one sort) cannot be perform'd without the Gift (of the other sort of Prayer.) Who does not see that here is a manifest Transition from one kind to another ?

*By the same Spectacles any may see the Answer to the remaining part of this Argument. Yet you triumph on it, and tell me, you fear I am Caught, and 'tis good enough for me, for I would take no warning, &c. And afterwards, That you are forc'd to watch me as a Cat watches a Mouse, and hunt me into a Trap: As if you were resolv'd to make your Readers believe that you were better skill'd in making and laying Mou'e-traps, than in writing Controversies. And to shew how sedulous you are in your Employment, as well as your extraordinary Penetration; you look about and espy a little Loop-Hole, which you say I am nibbling at, viz. That though
there*

there be one sort of Prayer that may be perform'd without an Ability of Expressions, as Mental Prayer; yet there is another sort, as Vocal Prayer, that cannot; and so there may be some hopes that that at least may lye in an Ability of Expressions.

But you'll stop up this Loop-hole with a little of your Logick, which indeed for the Grain on't deserves to be put to no better Office. And here I need not mention the first Edition of this Learned Paragraph in your written Letter; where you tell me, *I must know the Gift of Prayer in General is the Genus, and Mental and Vocal Prayer are the two Species; though in the same Breath you say, they are the two Species of Prayer; thus making Prayer, and the Gift of Prayer, the Act and the Faculty (according to your self) the same: This you thought was too much expos'd to appear in publick.*

Let me therefore only examine the Reason of your Printed Emendation, which is, *That Prayer in General is the Genus, and Mental and Vocal Prayer are the two Species of it: Now the Genus must be common to both the Species, as Animal is to Homo and Brutum; for Tota Natura Generis continetur in qualibet Specie; so that the Nature, and consequently the Gift of Prayer, must lye in something that is common both to Mental and Vocal Prayer, which therefore cannot be the Ability of Expressions.*

But pray hold! how does this follow, *So that the Nature, and consequently the Gift of Prayer?* — Is the Nature and the Gift of Prayer all one? This Waste of Logick does not argue the Excess of it. Do I not read in your Sermon, That there was in the Apostles Days an extraordinary Gift of Prayer? Do you not place that Gift of Prayer in a Readiness or Ability of Expressions? Yet may not I as well alledge against it, *That Prayer is the Genus with respect to Mental and Vocal Prayer; and so the Nature, and consequently the Gift of Prayer then must lye in something common to both the Species of Prayer, Mental as well as Vocal, and so can't be an Ability of Expressions?*

pressions? What self-consistence is there in this? *The Gift of Prayer*, I might say with you, *must extend to all sorts of Prayer*, therefore you improperly call any other but *Pious Motions*, the *Gift of Prayer*, formerly; and so was *Chrysostom* with his *χαρισμα ιυχης*, in the wrong also, for the same Reason: This is all I can bring your Logick to.

Now, *By this*, you tell me, *I may see that neither Words, nor an Ability of uttering 'em, is any necessary or essential part of Prayer*. But a man must have very bad Eyes indeed, that does not see that Words are a very necessary part of Vocal Ministerial Prayer, of which we speak: And who ever said that an *Ability of uttering Words*, was any part at all, necessary or unnecessary of Prayer, though Vocal Prayer presupposes it? But you prove neither of these to be an essential part of Prayer, for *G O D does not need 'em*: — And may not I this way prove as well, That *Pious Motions* are no essential part of Prayer, for neither does *G O D* need them? He knows our *Necessities*, say you, before we ask; and does he not, think you, before we so much as mentally desire their Supply? And hates the much speaking and vain Repetitions of the Hypocrite: Ay, whether in the Litany, or Free Prayer. You go on, So that all the use of Words in Prayer, is to help us to join and agree in putting up the same Petitions: But I would not have you exclude Confession and Thanksgiving from being parts of Prayer. And here say you, the fewer words the better, if the heart be sincere: Why, then a Long Liturgy may well be spared; yea, what need any more than a *L O R D* have mercy upon us?

I shall pass over your *Nauseous Complement* on your self, as a *Man of Sense*; and not grate you with a Complaint of the *Troubles of the Former*, which you believe as little of, as you do of the *Happiness of the Present Times*; and only remind you of your Continued

nued Impertinence in this too long Debate. I have distinguish'd with others, 'twixt the Gift and Grace of Prayer; I leave it to any Reader to judge, whether you speak not in your Sermon of Publick Prayer: But if you'll count 'tis your Province to Dictate and Instruct, to *warn* and *watch* others, and not to read nor consider what's offered you, I shall account my Time lost to Dispute with *Canons* and *Organs*, that speak so loud that none can be heard but 'em-selves, (to use one of *Mr. Baxter's Crude Sayings*, as you call 'em;) And if you are like your *Bells*, that have a Loud Tongue and no Ears, and are all for going *on, on*, and take no heed to what is Answer'd you: And if you think to *expose my Weakness both in Town and Countrey* (as you write me) by such sorry scribbling, Take heed you do not expose your own. Therefore Reconsider your Text, Rally your shattered Arguments, Give particular Replies, Stablish your Notion with competent Authority, and rest assured that Confidence and Contempt will never be taken for a Confutation, by,

S I R,

April 1.
1697.

Your Humble Servant,

J. M.

A N-

ANSWER TO LETTER V.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

I Know not to what to attribute your Repeating so often the same Thing and Words, unless to the Influence your Notion hath on you, viz. Your dislike of various Words and Phrases in another Case. For in this Letter, except a few Quotations out of the *Fathers*, (which are nothing to the purpose) I see nothing but what hath had a former Answer. But your Repetitions must excuse mine.

You begin yours with Confusion, viz. Attempting to prove the Gift of Prayer, to be the Grace, thus;

The Faculty of performing the Duty of Prayer aright, is the Gift of Prayer.

But the Faculty of performing the Duty of Prayer aright, is likewise the Grace of Prayer.

Ergo. The Gift of Prayer, is likewise the Grace of Prayer. Et vicissim.

Ans. To the Major. How oft shall I tell you, That the Faculty of performing freely and without the help of a Book, the Duty of Vocal Prayer aright, i. e. suitably adapting Expressions to Occasions, is the Gift of that Prayer.

But then to the *Minor*. This Faculty is not the Grace of Prayer; and so you see the Gift of Prayer in Question, and the Grace of Prayer, are Distinct.

But you'll next enquire into the Original of this Distinction, and you find it not coin'd in the Mint of the Bible.

Ans. It would be well indeed, were nothing made to pass for Current in GOD's Worship, but what has the Stamp of Divine Authority on it. But what if we should not find the words themselves in the *Scriptures*, yet is there not enough there to justify such a Distinction? Are not *Gifts* and *Graces*, mentioned as Distinct in your very Text, 1 Cor. 12. last? The more Excellent way or Grace in the Text, your good Affections in your Sermon, are comprised under *Charity*, Chap. 13. The best or Spiritual Gifts for Edification, are spoken to, Chap. 14. among which, is the Gift of *Praying*, (as you call it) whether Extraordinary, or Ordinary, alters not the Case: A Gift of Prayer 'tis in your own words, and yet distinguish'd from Grace, or the more Excellent way.

So that though this Distinction in those very Terms, be not in Scripture, yet you see there is Foundation for it. (And, you Caution me, p. 136. against that wild Principle of Believing nothing but what is expressly recorded there.) And I see 'twill pass Muster with you, if it be found in the Writings of the Fathers. But to what end those Quotations should serve, I can't Devise, unless it be to let me know, that you have made a very narrow search into some of the Centuries. Ay, Sir, and I have made but a superficial Search into Dr. Falkner's *Vindication of Liturgies*, where, yet, I have found all made ready to your hands, with your Notion of the Gift of Prayer, &c.

But after your great Fatigue, I find nothing in all these Fathers, but what some modern Non-conformists might afford you.

What *Austin* says, That *Oratio inter Gratia munera Reperitur*, is true of Prayer in the strictest Sense, and in any Sense, if you take *Gratia* in the largest. *Hilary's* words, *Non multiloquio sed Conscientiâ*, don't absolutely condemn many words; (but suppose they did, what's that to our purpose?) but when the Conscience or Heart does not attend 'em; And, who of us are not of his mind? That GOD hears not the Voice, but the Heart,

Heart, or the Voice without the Heart, you needed not have Quoted St. *Cyprian* to prove; I should have believed *David*, (whom you leave out in your Print.) But pray, why must it be plain *David*, when 'tis St. *Hilary*, &c.

And why *Basil* and *Clement*s are produced I know not, unless it be to Confirm what hath been told you before, That a Man may Pray, and acceptably too, without any words at all; yet both you and we in Publick, make use of 'em. These Quotations are so far from being subservient to your Purpose, that they are more pertinent to mine; for if GOD chiefly regards the Heart, and is not taken with the Expression, then though *Free-Prayer* may not please Critical Ears with that Elegancy that Compos'd Forms may have, (tho' I would not have you think that I plead the Cause of any unmeet Expressions in Prayer) GOD, that hears the silent Language of the Heart, may accept some Incongruities, where the Prayer is Affectionate, though it be not Curious. And this is the use that *Austin* himself makes of it, *De Catech. Rud.* *Noverint etiam non esse Vocem ad Aures Dei, nisi Animi Affectum; ita enim non iridebunt, si aliquos Antistites & ministros Ecclesiæ forte animadvertierint vel cum Barbarismis vel Solecismis Deum Invocare.* Let 'em understand that GOD attends not so much to the Voice, as the inward Affection; and so they will not fear, if perhaps they observe some Bishops and Ministers of the Church, with some (one would think, these were not prescrib'd) *Barbarisms* and *Solecisms*.

But indeed, Sir, I look on it as a piece of Pedantry, as *Malebranch* describes it, To load Writings with many Quotations out of Ancient Authors, (as is the Ostentation of many) to prove what's next to a first Principle, and that shines with its own Light, as this does, That GOD, who is a Spirit, hath most regard to the Hearts and Spirits of Men. But yet 'tis strange, how that of *Chrysostom* 'scap'd your sedulous Inquisition, *ἡ καρδία τοῦ κυρίου ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχή*. If you pretend 'twas Extraordinary,

ordinary, yet 'twas *χρησμός* *ἰσχύς*, the Gift of Prayer; and 'twas Distinguish'd from the Grace, being conferr'd on one: And why may we not keep up such a Distinction still, though that which was truly the *Extraordinary Gift of Prayer* is Ceas'd? So that you see ground for this Distinction, both from the *Scriptures* and the *Fathers*, where you could find *no News or Tydings of any such thing*.

Well, but at length you have found the Father of this Distinction, *that hath made so much noise and done so much mischief in the World*, and he no less a Man than *Bp. Wilkins*, whom you treat with an unbecoming Indifferency: But 'tis not true, he was the first Inventer; I can mention *Ames*, with others before, and shall only add *Bishop Sanderson*, who at a Visitation Sermon, on 1 Cor. 12. 7. Preach'd 1620, almost forty Years before *Bishop Wilkins's* Book came out, gives us the same Distinction of Gifts of Sanctification and of Edification, and under the latter sort, Instances in this which is the Subject of our Debate, and calls it a *Gift or Ability to enlarge our selves in Prayer readily, and with fit Expressions on any present Occasion*; this surely is not the Grace. He also commends a Minister *that exercises his Gift in Prayer, if he thinks he should not else be able to Discharge himself from the guilt of Unfairfulness, &c.*

Notwithstanding this, you Abuse *Bishop W's* words, making him to say, *that this Excellent Art was reserved for his Discovery in the Latter Days, and hid from all Former Ages*; whereas, these are none of his Words; or if they had, is this any Confession that he first Coined the Distinction of a Gift and Grace of Prayer? And is that any stronger Proof of it, by which you say, *He plainly makes himself the first Author, telling us, he drew up the Substance of his Book many Years before he knew so much as any one Author who had formerly attempted this Subject*. For though then he knew not any, yet does he not immediately tell you, he had since read the Profitable Labours

hours in the same kind, of others that lived before him.

But I can't pass this, without detecting a Notorious Self-Contradiction of yours. If Bishop *Wilkins* be indeed the *Author of this Excellent Art*, and first presented the World with this Singular Gift, which Gift, you dream, he would willingly afterward have recall'd: How then does it plainly appear (as in your Sermon) to be a Gift of *Romish Invention*, brought into these Kingdoms by *Popish Emis-saries in Queen Elizabeth's days*? I do as little expect you should reconcile this Contradiction, as I do that you will prove the Bishop was one of these.

But at last, we have one Argument, to prove, That a Facility and readiness of Speech, is not the Gift of Prayer. *Ans.* And who ever said it was? I only say, a Readiness to express our Sins, Wants and Mercies, to GOD, in a suitable manner, may be stiled, the Gift of Prayer; I do not say, a Readiness of Speech in General is so. Now, a Lawyer does not discover this Gift in Pleading, nor do Men of Parts daily shew it in matters of common Converse. Though Natural Endowments do confessedly dispose for it, yet Study of the Scripture and of our selves, and frequent Practice, are further requisite.

You ask next, *If the Gift of Prayer should lye in such a Readiness of Speech, what shall they do that want it?* *Ans.* I have told you in a Readiness of what it lyes. But,

1st. It looks ill when Men are Fluent on other occasions, and only Tongue-tied at their Prayers; when they pass for good Speakers every where else; but (as a moderate *Conformist* expresses it) are down in the mouth at the Throne of Grace. This is a Defect that is suspicious, to be not so much their Calamity, as their Impiety: The very sense of Want and Pain, will open the Mouth: A Malefactor, though no Orator, when begging for his Life, will find Words more significant than any Ceremony.

2dly. The design of the Bishop's Book, is to help those that are willing; he would not have any to Despair, but to use a suitable Form, till they have some Skill; not by confining themselves to their *Crutch*, necessitate a continual Impotency; Practise agen and agen; read the Scriptures and good Books; labour to get a sense of their own Necessities, &c. And to such who shall thus endeavour, 'twill not be difficult to Pray without a Book or Form.

And, whereas you say, *Whilst they are studying and beating their Brains about Matter and Words, what will become of the Heart?*

Ans. 1. Don't you commend *Free Prayer* in Private, p. 185. as a *Pious and Excellent Practice?* and, you wish heartily, *That all who profess the Name of Christ, would Imitate it;* and yet here you ask *What shall they do in Private?* and tell us, *the Mind can't attend two such different things at once, as the Words and Desires.* Is not this *M.* against *H.* and lamentable Self-Inconsistence? But,

2. What doth this Proclaim, but your Unacquaintance with the *Gift* we speak of? Would not the serious Consideration of *GOD's Word* and Works, and our own Ways, help us both as to *Matter* and *Words*? This done, there would be no such need of beating the Brains, when you Pray.

3. Who asks where the Heart of a poor Starving Beggar, or Condemned Person is, when they don't express their Case from any Book or Form?

4. When such as your late Bishop K. and the present Bishop St. can Preach so fluently without Notes from a Treasure within, do they study and beat their Brains about *Matter* and *Words*? Bishop W. tells us in his *Gift of Preaching*, *That if we have the Matter and Notion well Digested, the Expressions will easily follow:* The same he saith concerning Prayer, *That Expressions will easily follow a preparation of Matter and Method.* Finally, he tells us,

'Tis

'Tis not easie to expresse what a Difference a Man may find in respect of inward Comfort and Satisfaction, 'twixt those Prayers that are thus conceiv'd from the Affections, and those Forms we say by Rote, or read out of Books, p. 29, 47.

You say, You fear, that some by trying, and others by bearing it irreverently and rudely Practis'd by others, have wholly laid aside the Duty.

I Answer; Take heed that the Vilifying this Gift, especially as if Introduced by Romish Emissaries, be not found to be the main Occasion; and lest you make People Atheists, Infidels, Sadducees, whilst you so Zealously caution 'em against the Pharisee. I am,

April 15.
1697.

S I R,

Yours,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER VI.

To Mr. H——.

S I R,

YOU design'd your last (I suppose) as a Reply to mine; but throughout the whole, there's not one word in Form said, either in Answer to my *Arguments*, or in Vindication of your own; but the greater part is bare Repetition, sometimes right, most times wrong of what I wrote you: So that at this Rate we may Scribble on *ad Infinitum*, and never come to an Issue.

I never

I never called *the Gift of Prayer* any other than an *Ability of Chusing and Using suitable Expressions in this Duty* or the like: and yet you say *my Notion of this Gift is a Perfect Changling*. Now if you took it for *the new and varied Words themselves*, and so argued against it, I can't help it; 'twas your own mistake, not my *Inconsistency*. And yet you tell the Reason why this *Notion* is so unstable, *viz.* *Because I place this Gift in the Tongue which is so Slippery a Member*: Now this Gift no more resides in the Tongue, than the Gift of *Preaching, &c.* Though the Tongue be the Instrument of Speech, yet there's a great deal more requisit to the Gift of *Ministerial Prayer* than the Tongues *volubility*.

Your next Paragraph about the *Ability of Expressions* being improperly called the *Gift of Prayer*, was Replied to in my last. And pray, why must what hath been often *Formally answer'd*, Face about again out of *Form*, (when you have taken no notice of it) as if nothing had been said to it? The main Reason you alledge is this, that *that must not be call'd the Gift of Prayer, that is not at all of the Essence of Prayer*. Now I'll prove from your own Words that it may; *The Gift of any thing, and Consequently of Prayer, is the Faculty of doing it well, and as it ought to be done, and in the best Manner*, say you; Now it is not Essential to Prayer that it be done in all Respects as it ought to be, there are many Infirmities that attend the *Prayers* of the Best. But can a Man write without the Gift of Writing? *Ans.* Yes, according to your own Explication of a Gift, he may write, though he don't *Write well*, or in the best manner; So that here's no such *Aburdity* as you Imagine.

Moreover, say you, I may learn from hence (from whence? From *Dr. Falk. Vind. p. 30?*) that *GOD's bestowing the Assistance of his Grace to kindle and excite pious Dispositions of Heart, — is most properly his vouchsafing the Gift of Prayer*. What! more properly than the
pious

pious Motions so excited, of which every where before? and our Exercising or Exerting such earnest Desires, is our having the Gift of Prayer. I thought not! why ought not a Man rather to have the Gift (which you your self call a Faculty) of Prayer, before he can Exercise or Exert it? From the same Author, and of a like Nature, is that which follows, concerning the Gift and Grace of Charity, 'twixt which, and Prayer, I see not the least Parity, and so the Instance is no Proof, and needs no other Confutation than Denial.

Next, having triumph'd vainly in your good Success in Curing my Malady of Excursions, you lament my falling into a worse Distemper, viz. plain Contradictions. But let's hear your Proof in your next Paragraph; the Charge is, that whereas in my first Letter I said, that no One Asserted that the Words and Expressions themselves were the Gift, but the Ability; in my last I assert that new and varied Expressions are the Gift; and this Appears, say you, as clear as the Sun, from my Arguments and Distinctions.

That which you call my first Argument, viz. an Appeal to the Common way of Speaking, was only mentioned Occasionally under the Answer to one of yours, viz. that when 'tis said any One hath (Shews or Exercises) a good Gift in Prayer, we mean not that he hath Pious Motions (which we know nothing of) but that he aptly Expresses (or can Express) himself in that Duty; hereupon you conclude that the apt Expressions (not the Ability aptly to Express) are with me the Gift of Prayer. But does any such things follow from my Words? Or what's all this but Trifling? But the Offence is, that I do *Loqui cum vulgo*, — *Quem penes Arbitrium est, & vis & norma loquendi*. Your Notions are so Sublime, that you commend to Ministers nothing less than Pious Motions as the only Gift of Prayer now remaining in the Church, and your Converse is so Elevated

ted above the *Vulgar*, that you can't descend to the poorer sort to demand your Dues, as having no Interest of yours lying among 'em.

But the next *Argument*, you say, *is more borne for the words than this, for therein I tell you that the words themselves whereby we express our selves to GOD in Prayer, are commonly termed Prayer*;—as in the Instances of the LORD's Prayer and Common-Prayer: Now, say you, *can any thing more plainly follow from hence, than that the words themselves are with me the Gift of Prayer?*

Ans. 'Twould gain your Gift of Arguing no great Reputation, shou'd I here remind you of the Reply you wrote me, (for this, as other of your Letters, are quite transform'd into another Shape by your many Corrections.) My Conclusion it seems did not please you, and so without invalidating, or indeed saying a word to either Premise, you ingeniously bid me lay aside it, and take one of your providing, which no way followed. But indeed I need look no further than your Print to find much of the same Nature; Even here you ask, *can any thing more plainly follow, than that the words themselves are with me the Gift of Prayer?* Pray do but read my Argument, and then Answer your self.—If the Words are term'd Prayer, then the Ability is the Gift of that Prayer.

But the Words are termed Prayer: Therefore said I, The Ability; But you say *it plainly follows, therefore the words themselves are the Gift of Prayer.* This is enough I'm sure to convince any that can but make a Syllogism.

Your Instance of the Parrot answers nothing, and is as applicable to those places of Scripture, where mention is made of Prayer without any *Pious Affections*; and People are apt to believe, that this volatile *Animal* is as capable of *Using Forms*, as *Extempore Effusions*.

But,

But, you say, I have one Argument that quite Contradicts and Destroys all this again, and that is to prove that a Man may have the Gift of Prayer without the Gift of Elocution applicable to any Subject, and so it can neither lie in the Words, nor in the Ability. *Ans.* Now there is not the least shadow of Truth in this Consequence, so confidently inferr'd; nor more Ingenuity in what immediately follows, where you leave out a main part of my Argument in the Repetition, to facilitate your Answer. You having told me often, *that what I call'd the Gift of Prayer was only the Gift of Speech, or Elocution applicable as well to the other Occasions: I prov'd these to be Distinct*, because there are many that have the one, and yet want the other.— To this your first Reply is, *who Doubts but the Gift of Prayer, and the Gift of Elocution are Distinct?* When I prov'd they were so in my Sense of the word Gift, or according to me, which you omit. But as to the *Minor*, you can't believe that there are any such, who being well acquainted with the *Scriptures*, and the Heads of Prayer, and having a good Treasure within, which hath gain'd by Conscientious Exercise, though they can't declaim as Orators on Secular Business, yet can pour out their Hearts to GOD in apt Expressions: To say 'tis not possible, is little less than *Lampoon upon the Common Sense of English-men, (as one)*. But with Nicodemus when told of *Regeneration*, you cry out, how shall *this be?* And say I, how well would it be with the *Church of Christ*, if all its Pastors understood experimentally what the *Spirit of Grace and Supplication* meant! Not to impose my own, let me give you a *Bishop's Sentiment* in this Case, viz. *A Child of GOD (saith Bishop Hopkins Alm. Christ. p. 72.) may be of so weak Parts, as to shew himself broken and Incoherent, when put upon Common Discourse; yet ingage him in Prayer, and what a Torrent of Divine Rhetorick will be pour into the Bosom of GOD?* Here was a Bishop it seems had known and heard wonderful

derful things of this kind, though you know not: And I know what the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 2. 12. of some who speak Evil of the things they understand not.

And (Sir,) there are many Prayers, which the wanton Orator, and curious Observer of Words, and Pri-ers into their Proprieties may call *Nonsense*, that may be most admirable Sense in the Ears, and Judgment of GOD, and all good Men. When 'tis experimentally found, that those Words that come from the heart of the Speaker, find the nearest and readiest way to the hearts of the Hearer; And those Phrases (whether varied or no) are most significant, that the affected Heart of the Speaker immediately Dictates to his Tongue.

Leaving thus my Arguments as you found 'em, you pass to my Distinctions; and here I am sorry to see almost as many Falshoods as Lines. That the Words and Expressions are the Common Gift, whatever you Affirm, you cou'd not but know, I often denied. The next Paragraph has not a Jot of Truth in it, and indeed but little Sense neither: I utterly deny I ever had the Distinction between *the Internal Spiritual Gift of Prayer, in which, say you, consists the Life and Spirit of it* (yes, the Spirit of Prayer consists in the Spiritual Gift of Prayer!) And an External verbal Gift made up of *new Words and Phrases*; these are no other than your Fictions.

Next, you say, *That New and Varied Words are my Gift: Because I say that Old Words are good for nothing, but to dull and deaden our Devotion*; Now here the Antecedent, Consequence, and Consequent are all feign'd, and charg'd on me without the least regard to Truth.

Nor did I ever distinguish *between a Moral, or Theological, and Artificial Way of performing the Duty of Prayer.* 'Twas only between a Theological Rectitude, and an Artificial one.

Nor,

Nor, *Lastly*, between a Successful way of Praying, and an Unsuccessful, or a way of Praying to no purpose; though you most Disingenuously affirm all this, without any concern for Truth, or your own Reputation. What sort of a Review such abusive Treatment will require, is left to your own Consideration, by,

S I R,

April 22.

1697.

Your Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER VII.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

IN yours of April 15, you tell me, You hope I begin to see what a vain empty thing my Arguments and Distinctions make of the Gift of Prayer: But what grounds you have for your Hopes, I know not, since you were not so kind as to endeavour my Illumination, by any Formal Answer to any of 'em.

Verba dare, you tell me, signifies to Deceive; and therefore I wonder you think your Letter (where there is little else but Words) should carry such Conviction with it. But, pray Sir, how came you so well acquainted with our Hearts, as to usurp the Throne of the Searcher of 'em, that you presume to say, That instead of the Heart, we give him the Tongue, and with the Heathen, think him delighted with the Gift of much Speaking? But, why

why not the *Pharisees*, as in both your Celebrated Sermons, but that I hope you *begin to see what a vain and empty thing 'tis*, in the midst of so many Mistakes, to be Confident? But, why may not both Tongue and Heart be engaged in *Conceiv'd* as, well as Common Prayer?

That the Gift of Speech, and the Gift of Prayer, according to me, are the same. You next will prove by this Argument,

The Ability of Expressions, is nothing else but the Gift of Speech.

But the Gift of Prayer, is an Ability of Expressions.

Ergo. The Gift of Prayer, is nothing else but the Gift of Speech.

Now, here the *Minor* I deny, which yet you venture to say, is mine, whereas, I never said the Gift of Prayer was the Ability of Expression in General, but only of *suitable Expressions to GOD in this Duty*: If you insert my whole Description, I deny your *Major*.

What you talk of next, is the Absurdity of my maintaining a Man may *Pray fluently without the Gift of Speech*, which is only thus, That a Man may speak very fluently on one Occasion, (*viz. In Prayer, having much Exercis'd himself therein, &c.*) who is not so fluent on all others; and to say this is gross enough to be felt, is Senseless, and needs no further Confutation.

You say, You *find me Arguing*, (but I'm sure I don't find you *Answering*, though any body may find you Contradicting your self twice in two Lines, when you pretend to Answer the Argument drawn) *from the Extraordinary Inspired, to the Ordinary Acquired Gift of Prayer*. Now, here you tell me, That the first was *peculiar to the Apostles*; (But p. 149. you say, 'Twas granted to the Apostles, and some other of the Primitive Christians) and *Appropriated wholly to the matter and Words of Prayer*; (but

p. 9. *It has no relation to Words or outward Expressions, but to Sighs and Groans, which cannot be uttered.*) One would think, that so many Contradictions should shame you from Scribbling at this sorry rate. But you add, *The Ordinary Gift is applicable to any other Occasion*: But have I not prov'd the contrary? And can you think that all who can pertinently express themselves to GOD in Prayer, can as properly prefer a Petition to the King, or plead a Cause at the Bar, or the like? Besides, suppose this Gift were applicable to other Occasions, it might for all that, be the Gift of Prayer still. A Gift, you say your self, is only *a Faculty of doing a thing well*: Now, one and the same Qualification, may dispose to several different Acts. How much more valid is this Argument against your own Notion of the Gift of Prayer; which you place in pious Motions and good Affections? Are not these, think you, applicable to *Preaching, Singing, &c*? Do they not dispose to *Reading, Hearing, Acts of Charity*? And why then, may I ask, Do you say, *these are the Gift of Prayer*?

You having spent Sixty Pages to little purpose, now you'll make the Matter as clear as the Sun, *by laying aside the word Gift, and enquiring into the Nature of Prayer*; that is, as you use to say, having continued one Excursion hitherto, you'll *run clear away* into another; and I'll not stop you; for whatever Rubs lye in your way, for ought I see, you'll go whether you please.

I would not be too Critical on what you call the *Proper Notion of Prayer*, though perhaps there may be all this, (as in Meditation on the Divine Perfections where yet there's no proper Prayer at all. Nay, according to this Notion, a Man may Pray without either *Confession, Petition, or Thanksgiving*, which are the three Parts of Prayer.

Now, this second Digression of yours is, that you may repeat your Encomiums of Established Forms, and reflect on Free-Prayer, on which a few Strictures will suffice.

First, you say, p. 63, *We are acquainted with the Forms beforehand, and so may safely join, and say Amen.* *Ans.*

1. 'Tis an inconsiderable Objection, saith Bishop Wilk. *Gt. of Prayer*, p. 12.

2. 'Tis certain, GOD's People did not know what Solomon would Pray for, 1 *King.* 8. Nor what Hezekiah, 2 *Chron.* 30. Nor Jehoshaphat, 2 *Chron.* 20. Nor Ezra, Ez. 9. Yet this was no prejudice to their Devotion.

To what you say, *That Unity, Order, Peace, Charity, are best secured and shewed by Forms, and the Harmony of Publick Worship, best preserved, &c.* I would have you soberly to Consider,

(1.) Did not the *Apostles* best know how to secure the *Harmony of Publick Worship*? And if so, then why, when they preach'd and Planted Churches in *Asia, Europe and Africa*, had they not Composed a *Common-Prayer Book* for, and Impos'd it on all, the Use of which would have been Incontested?

(2.) Where doth GOD call for such a *Verbal Harmony*? Is it not sufficient in his Account, that we Pray for the same things, though in diverse *Forms and words*; is not this as much *Harmony* as he calls or cares for?

(3.) Can you tell why there should not be as strict *Uniformity* in words before Sermon, as at a Sacrament? Do you know any reason, why so many of the *Regular Clergy* should be suffered to vent what they please, and so introduce *Confusion*? Why don't you speak out with your *Fiery Doctor*, at whose Forge, you have taken and sharpen'd all your Tools, p. 187, and tell us plainly, 'Tis neither Decency nor Order for the Clergy to Conform to the Fanaticks, in praying before Sermon! That 'tis a very senseless and absurd Practice; against Law and Reason, that there should be a strict and solemn Reinforcement of the Canon upon all, without Exception; that the old sober form of Bidding Prayer be restored, that has been justled out of the Church by an Upstart Puritanical Encroachment, &c.

(4.) Why shou'd not Ministers be under an Injunction

junction to preach the same things in the same words, as well as pray 'em? And so you are as fit to be sent with the *Czar* into *Moscow*, where there's nothing but *Liturgy* and *Homilies*, as we are into *Scotland*, where there's neither of 'em.

You say, *By the liberty of Free-Prayer, Men may, and often do pray one against another*: And I say, So they do too often Preach one against another; and therefore, must not all the words they shall say be writ, for 'em to preserve an *Harmony*? But why may not Christians and Churches be united in one GOD, one Saviour, one Faith, one Doctrin of Christ and his Sacraments, though there be some Differences, as to their Customs and modes of Worship? If Passions and Animosities were allay'd, if in one *Parish* there were the *Common-Prayer*; in another, the *Reformed Liturgy*; in a Third, the *Directory*; in a Fourth, *Neither*: As long as they profess the same Faith, preach the same Gospel, administer the same Sacraments, submit to the same Civil Government; as long as they all Swear *Allegiance to the same Rightful Prince*, and Subscribe any *Test*, to assure the World they are sound *Protestants*, what should hinder *Union*? If Pride and Passion, and Selfishness, were mortified, *Sects* and *Schisms* wou'd not be multiplied. The *Papists* Glory, how their *Church of England* was closely United formerly, though there were several *Different Offices* that were in use among 'em in those Dark days: One Office after the use of *Salisbury*; another after the use of *York*; another of *Bangor*; another of *Lincoln*, to King *Edward* the VIth's time. And in this Kingdom are a multitude of particular *Corporations* and little *Polities*, whose Customs and modes of Government within themselves, are very different; as different as there are *Cities, Towns and Parishes*, and yet they are all United under His Majesty, and the General Laws of the Land. Do those different *Modes and Customs* in the least break the *Union* of the Nation? And why might

it not be so in the Church too, if our Governors pleas'd? Or is it not as Reasonable to plead for the Destruction of the particular Customs, and Charters of Burroughs, Corporations, Cities, as the only way to Union in the Civil Government; as 'tis so confidently to assert, that there's nothing but Uniformity in these lesser Matters, that can Unite us in the Ecclesiastical?

You say, That Men will mingle their Errors and Passions with their Prayers, by which means Confusion must necessarily break in.

Ans. How rare do you find any Ministers (after all your Outcries) that are guilty of Intolerable Weaknesses this way? If there are, 'tis notorious enough; the words are spoken in Publick, and there's Power sufficient to punish 'em; and (as the Silencers were told) in all other Professions these means are thought sufficient to regulate the Professors. The King chuses Able men for Judges, that are responsible for their Mal-administrations; but though the Estates of Men are of great Consequence and Concern, yet he does not prescribe 'em Forms of Words: So Physicians are first carefully tried, and then constantly trusted with the Lives of Men, without tying 'em to a particular Recipe, or Medicine, or any Book to practise by: And if due care be taken in their Admission, why can't Ministers be trusted in their proper Work?

You say, That by joining in Publick Established Forms, we do shew that Duty and Reverence, that is owing to our Superiors.

Ans. Sir, we do honour our Governors, and are careful to pay the Duty we owe 'em; but we don't find that this is their work to make Prayers for all Ministers, any more than 'tis to make Sermons for 'em; nor do we take such Dictators as you to be our Masters; and this Doctrin of Blind Obedience, was, we are sure, a Jesuitical Invention. Our Superiors are Ministers of GOD to us for good, and their Power is for Edification, not Destruction:

struction: And we are afraid, lest an Illimited Power in this Case, should turn *Free-Prayer* out of our Houses and Closets, as well as shut the *Church-Doors* against it.

• Besides, I think you have no such extraordinary reason to Glory in your absolute Obsequiousness. Let me give you only one Instance in each of the two late Reigns; In the former, when suitable Petitions, and Thanksgivings for Deliverance from an Hellish *Popish Plot* (own'd to be such by King and Parliament) were kept out of Publick Prayers: In the Latter, when a Prayer for a pretended P. of *W.* crept in; Though you manifested your Subjection, yet I believe 'twas not taught you, nor *Inculcated in Holy Scripture*; and by this time, no body thanks you for your Omission in the one, or Obedience in the other.

You Instance, what a Blessed Time for Order, Peace, Charity and Amity, we had before the Wars, p. 65. when all Men resorted to the same place and way of Worship, &c. Ay, and then,

1. To the Clerk's Ale, and Dancing, encouraged by the Book for Sports on the Lord's day: But,

2. If there were more Concord then, was it not because there were not such difficult Terms to make the Discord? There were not such Conditions of Communion then. And so, (as one saith) restore Indifferent things to their Ancient Liberty, and we should soon arrive at our Ancient Amity; for the Old Rule must Cure us, *in necessariis Unitas, in non necessariis Libertas, in utrisque Charitas. In things necessary, Unity; in things Indifferent, Liberty, and in both, Charity.*

3. Where is there less Division in the World, than in Scotland, where there is no Liturgy to Unite 'em; and was it not an Attempt to impose on 'em that broke their Peace?

4. If Bishop *Laud's Faction* had such Peace before the Wars, so had not the many Thousands that were forc'd to remove to *Holland*, to *America*, for peaceable

Habitations, ; or that liv'd in danger of *Higb Commission and Bishops Courts.*

5. If you are for Peace and Unity, why won't you Petition our Governos to remove the Occasions of Division ; — as *Declarations, Subscriptions, Reordination, &c.* which you call Indifferent, and we count Sinful ? If you must have the Old Liturgy your selves, what harm would it be to leave others the Reform'd one, which they are ready to prove to you, is far less exceptionable than yours ; when God hath said, as *Mal. i. 14.*

6. Is it doing as you would be done to ? Should the *Directory*, or the *Reformed*, or any other but your own *Liturgy*, be Imposed on you on the same Penalty that the *Common-Prayer* is on us, wou'd you not count it hard on you ?

If any thing else needed Answer, you might expect it from,

S I R,

April 22.
1697.

Your Friend and Servant,
J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER VIII.

To Mr. H—

S I R,

Yours must pass for an Answer to a Popular Objection, viz. That your Form can't provide for the Variety of Emergent Occasions ; about which, you say, you would not have me to be too confident, till your Considerations be weigh'd. Sir, I have weigh'd 'em in the *London Cases*, p. 243. once, and now in your Letter again, and return 'em to you to be Reconsidered.

i. 'Tis said, the ordinary and daily matter of Publick Prayer

Prayer is still the same,—of Confession, Petition, and Thanksgiving, &c. *Ans.* But (except some Generals that are to be continually insisted on,) Vulgar Experience shews the contrary. Certainly we have not daily the same Sins to confess, the same Temptations to encounter, the same Mercies to praise G O D for. The Providence of G O D towards Kingdoms, Places, and Persons, is in rich variety, and scarce looks upon two Weeks or Days with one and the same Face: And I think we should accomodate both our Praying and Preaching to the Divine Dispensations, and so to the Edification of the People. As to Preaching, there is the same Gospel Doctrine still, but we frequently change our Texts and Subjects, in compliance with the Divine Providence, and the Necessities of Souls; and why should not Prayer have a Grateful Variety? Can you tell, why, when there are such various Phrases in Scripture used for all the Parts of Prayer, Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, and all given by Inspiration, and profitable for Instruction, &c. we should use constantly your Expressions, and omit G O D's, or be tied up to one Phrase, and neglect the other, when G O D allows us the variety?

I do indeed say, *That* a Form of Common-Prayer doth use to float too much in Generalities; and so doth Bishop W. say, (*G. of Prayer*, p. 12.) And the Commissioners for Reformation at the Savoy, 1661. offer'd the following Exceptions against the Liturgy, among many others; *That whereas the Publiek Liturgy of a Church should in Reason comprehend the Sum of all such Sins as are ordinarily to be confess'd in Prayer by the Church, and of such Petitions and Thanksgivings as are ordinarily by the Church to be put up to G O D; the present Liturgy as to all these seems very Defective: Particularly,*

1. *There's no preparatory Prayer in our Address to G O D, for Assistance or Acceptance, yet many Collects in the midst of the Worship have little or nothing else.*

2. *The Confession is very Defective, not clearly expressing Original Sin, (unless, There's no Health in us, be it) nor sufficiently enumerating Actual Sins with their Aggravations, but consisting only of Generals; whereas Confession being the Exercise of Repentance, ought to be more particular.*

3. *There is also a great Defect as to such Forms of Publick Praise and Thanksgiving as are suitable to Gospel-Worship.*

4. *The whole Body of the Common-Prayer also consisteth very much of mere Generals; as, To have our Prayers heard, To be kept from all Evil, from all Enemies, and all Adversaries, —without any mention of the Particulars in which these Generals exist. This was the Sense of many Eminent Episcopal Divines in that Commission, not merely Mr. Baxter's Crude Notions, though he prepared a fuller Paper of Exceptions against the Book, which are worth your reading over in his Life, p. 308. He begins it, with shewing so much Defectiveness, Disorder, and vain Repetitions in it, as he thought, render it unfit to be the Common Impos'd Frame of Worship to the G O D of Order, without Amendment, &c. and tells you in Conclusion, That those Men that will not Reform any of this Disorder in the Liturgy, yet do nauseate and condemn the Prayers of Ministers and Christians, if they have but a fourth part of the Disorders, Tautologies, and Defects that the Liturgy has. Yet you predicate its Perfection and All-sufficiency for the Daily matter of Prayer. So*

2. *For all Occasions, as Rain, Fair Weather, War, Famine, Sickness, &c. no need of any other Prayer. But what if it should be Fire, as lately in this Town, where only one House was consumed, when the whole Town was in great Danger, where's there any Particular Thanksgiving for such a Deliverance? Or to prevent its Progress, when lately it laid Whitehall in Ashes?*

So where, for Wreck'd Persons that desire Prayer? and in many other Instances that frequently occur.

But,

3. You

3. You tell me the *Liturgy* is sufficient for Extraordinary Occasions too, as *National Dangers and Deliverances*, &c. As the *Assassination* of our Rightful King, an Intended *Jacobite* Insurrection by the Royal Church of England, animated by the *De Facto* men, and such as don't care what they say or swear, to effect that in a Time of Peace, that they could not in the War. Well, what must we do in this case? Why, here the Church will provide, as far as it thinks fit to take notice of such things; and you think it becomes us to stay for the Orders and Directions of our Superiors. But really, Sir, here I must beg your Pardon; It may be a Month or Six Weeks after such Hellish Designs are detected and defeated, e're Publick Prayers be made; and shall there be no particular Prayer or Praise offer'd in that Time, to obviate the Design, or celebrate the Deliverance? And all for fear of your false Fire, or Sacrifice of Fools, or of mistaking a Deliverance for a Defeat: (I don't question, Sir, but that which to me is a Deliverance, is to many others a Defeat,)

I tell you again, when we hear or fear such Villany intended, you must excuse us, if we do not stay till the *Grave Composures* of the whole Church shall Midwife our Conceptions into the World, and that for fear of a Miscarriage. All the *Jacobitish* Rhetorick in England shall never persuade us to so much Patience, nor make us delay Praise when due. 'Tis neither Gratitude to G O D, nor Loyalty to our King, to be so lowly and humble. And whether it be not a Diminution of the Divine Glory, and a Prejudice to the Publick Good, to be obliged to use this, and no other in Publick Prayer, I'll only try to convince you by an Instance in a late Reign, viz.

In November 1678, and March 79, both K. Charles II. and the Parliament unanimously declared, They were fully satisfied, from the Proofs they had heard, of an Horrid Popish Plot to murder him, and subvert the Protestant

stant Religion, that for divers years past had been contriving and carrying on. The Parliament applied 'emselfes to the King for a Solemn Fast: He proclaim'd one, Nov. 13. 78. and gave Order for proper Forms of Prayer: One Form was made, in which was not any thing new of that nature: This was complain'd of in Parliament; they voted another Address, and desir'd some special Forms might be made, expressing *the Horrid Popish Plot*, &c. and Order was given accordingly: A Second Form was made, which came out four or five Days before the Fast: But in this too, a *Member of the House of Commons* complain'd; that there was not a word of *Popish Plots*: A Third Address was voted to the King; he ordered that *Popish Plots* should be put in, but then 'twas too late to send the Form all over *England*: Never a People on Earth have seen more remarkable Issues of the Divine Providence, than we in this Kingdom have; and hath not G O D lost the Acknowledgment of his Influence on Human Affairs, because Ministers have been tied to one Old Invariable Form? You know what a Rariry such a Day was in those Times, and consequently no notice taken of those wonderful Occurrences, or God applied to either in special Prayer or Praise. And I may say, that this was one occasion, that not a few of the Clergy, and multitudes of others at that Time, did either Deny or Extenuate that Hellish Design, or turn'd it into Ridicule first, and into a Presbyterian Plot afterwards; and then *those Brave Men* indeed (that I may once use your Epithet) *Essex, Russel, Sidney, Cornish*, and many others, were effectually Silenc'd, and way made for those dreadful Dangers that the late Glorious *Revolution* rescued us from. And so various have been our Dangers and Deliverances, so strange the Operations of Divine Providence through all the Course of the War, that whether G O D hath not been defrauded of his due Tribute of Particular Prayer and Praise, by Ministers being confin'd to one Form,

Form, I shall submit to better Judgments. Only I'll never believe, till I see it well prov'd, that GOD ever left his Church so ill provided for, that if at any time he bestowed a new Mercy on 'em, or the particular Members of any particular Congregation, either preventing or removing some great Evil, or conferring some great Benefit, or bringing 'em into some great Distress, they could not obey his Command to call upon him in a Day of Affliction, that they might be delivered, nor praise him, till a Council was call'd to make a Collect for that purpose.

Well, hitherto we have heard that a Liturgy will supply *Daily, Ordinary, and Extraordinary Occasions*, and there's no need of free Prayer at all; but say you, if *there should be any Unheard of Occurrence*, (when yet in the same breath we are told, *there's no new thing under the Sun*) what then? Why then we *may either Compose a Form, or use Free Prayer*. A generous Concession, if it were not clog'd with an unhappy Restriction, *Provided it be done with Modesty, and due respect to the Authority of Superiors*, that is, I suppose, if Authority be not displeas'd with the matter of our Prayer: As let me put a Case in the late Reign; The Church was reduced to great Extremity by her *de jure* Head and Governor in all Causes Ecclesiastical, *Colleges Invaded, Bishops Tower'd*, and she had nothing left, but *Prayers and Tears* by her own Established Doctrine, *viz. That 'tis not lawful upon any Pretence whatever to take Arms, &c.* Now what Publick Prayers were there allowed, or could be used *with due Respect to Authority* at that time, to avert the Impending Storm? And had not some Men altered their Principles, more than their Prayers, 'tis likely we had not had such an *Unbloody Revolution*.

This is the only place in your whole Pacquet that you allow the Use of Free Prayer in Publick; but 'tis in such a Case, and on such Conditions, as renders it just Impracticable: Yet after all,

1. I can readily Grant you, there are several good Forms of *Confession, Petition, and Thanksgiving* in the Book of *Common-Prayer*; yet

2. 'Tis of little help to us, who must *Assent and Consent* to all and every thing contain'd and prescribed in and by it, and Promise we will use no other in *Publick Prayer*.

3. We are fully convinc'd that the *Reform'd Liturgy* is far better, more full in *Confession, Petition, and Thanksgiving*. Or observing Bishop *W.'s* Rules, will better help us to suit our Requests to Particular Occasions, more adapted to the Informing, exciting good Affections in those that join with us, and every way most promoting their Edification. If you really find your Form does best Answer those ends on the People you Minister to, who has a Word against it? Only we desire you not to perpetuate the Imposition on us, who find the Contrary.

4. We grant Humility is an Excellent Virtue to heal us; but why mayn't humble Men believe, that such as you are Fallible? And why mayn't I say, that the Apostles, whose Authority is unquestionable, left no such Impositions? Why do not you, or I know better what our Peoples Necessities and Circumstances are, than your Bishop *Ken*, that never was acquainted with 'em?

To prevent Rambling, I desire you to use Argument in what you'll be upon for the future, or 'twill be of no Signification to,

S I R,

Your Unfeign'd Friend and Servant,

April 22. 1697.

J. M.

Answer

ANSWER to LETTER IX.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

I Confess, I am several Letters in your Debt, but now it's time to clear the Score: I have suffer'd my self to be in Arrear, and you to Talk on, because 'twas Answering your self, not me. You pick a Sentence of my words, or form an Objection here and there in your own, as your Talent gives you an Advantage to expose, and to make your Readers (for you send your Letters open, to Traverse the Town, e'er they come to me) a little Merrier, not a jot Wiser.

The Design of your Next, is to answer a second Objection, viz. That *Publick Forms* are apt to deaden and dull Devotion; and that, as you make me say, because they are constantly the same old words, and likewise because they are read out of a Book too. This, you say, hath occasion'd the laying aside the Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer, which must be constantly read out of a Book, (and, yet I use both, and read neither.) 'Tis true, our Saviour Exhorted to the frequent reading of the Scripture, and the Apostle to give Attendance to Reading; it is not said, of Prayers; nor are Ministers, saith Bishop St. Iren. p. 334. in their Ordination, sent forth to be Readers of Publick Prayers, &c. Yet, no doubt, we are enjoyn'd to read the Scripture, that we may be the better furnish'd for Prayer, and for every good Word and Work.

But, Sir, is there not a great deal of Reason, why we should find more *Life and Spirit* in reading the pure Word of the Infallible GOD, (for which he himself hath (as you have been told) and ever will secure a Reverence in all Pious Souls) than we can expect in Reading *Forms composed by fallible Men*, without any Direction from him? And

And I would appeal to the Experience of any serious Christian, whether it be possible for him to read any Book of Man's making a thousand times, with that just and holy Reverence, and with so little *Tædium*, as he may do the Books and Chapters of *Holy Scripture*: So that there is a vast difference in the Case. And for Reading Publick Prayer, since no Warrant is produced for it from any Precept or Pattern of GODs Word, yea, is quite beside the Practice of the Primitive Churches, in which it was the Common Custom, to pray either with their Eys shut, or elevated towards Heaven, as *Tertullian* and *Origen* abundantly testifie; and since so many Experimentally find, that it dulls the Affections; it is in the Reckoning of many of your best Friends, great Pity, (as Mr. Bois saith) *when for want of the Gift of Prayer, you are obliged to use Forms; but you should have the Gift of Memory, to repeat 'em without Book.*

'Twill be a sufficient Reply to your whole Letter, to tell you one thing, and ask you another; for I know you'll slight both, though you can Answer neither.

First. I agen tell you, that multitudes of the Conformable Clergy, as well as the Non-conformists, do find by Experience, that one Invariable Form, is prejudicial to Fervency, and therefore they diversify their Expressions, according to diversity of Occasions; a Course which Prudence Dictates, is most likely to attain the Ends of their Sacred Office; for Food must be fitted to People's Tempers and Stomachs, and Physick to their Distempers, or you are unfit to Minister either: If you'll Cram all with the same Meat, or Drench all with the same Medicine, you'll make mad work on't; and yet is not this that which you'll Excommunicate, Gaol and Starve us all for? Our Contest with you is for our own and Peoples Edification, and to have your Indifferent things left so, you must have all others Compell'd to do as you; and either your words must be us'd, or none.

Secondly.

Secondly. I would ask you, whether your Reason against a grateful Variety in Prayer, will not hold against your various Words in Preaching too?

Should I in this Case use your words would, you account it Rational, or Ridiculous? *viz.* Does not the Apostle bid us hold fast the Form of sound Words; which we can neither hold fast, nor keep sound long, if subject to continual Variations in your Sermons? Must we be always Children, carried about with every wind of Doctrine? Do your kick-shaws and varieties in Preaching, best preserve the Unity and Harmony of Publick Worship? Or, have you not some other Game to play upon the People, which is better carried on by new Harangues, (such as in your Sermon) than by old honest Homilies?

But pray Sir, why are Homilies in no greater Reputation; for our Reformers that provided a Book of Prayers, did of Homilies too, as knowing, that those who had need of the one, had equal need of the other?

What serves your Talent of Variation in the Pulpit for, when the Reading these is prescribed in one of the Articles of Religion, which you Subscribe? If it be the soundness of the Matter that Affects and Edifies, then 'tis as well in a well compos'd Homily; but if it be only the Novelty and variety of the Phrases in which 'tis Deliver'd, then 'tis a meer Falacy; and if you would lay aside your Prejudices against those old Homilies, and mend your selves, you'll see little reason to mend them by the modern Elegancies of your Sermons; but rather great cause to Bless GOD, that the Church, whereof you are Members, hath provided for you such a Pious and Excellent Model of Doctrine, as well as Devotion. Yea, is it not pity, that one old Sermon against Extempore Prayer, should not please the People, to be worn thread-bare all the Year long? Most People will think the Reasoning on this Topick, to be as solid and conclusive as yours on the other.

Your glorying in your old Translation, old Words and Forms, gave occasion to the Answer of Vox Cleri,

to say, we have known some Men that have risen from the Dung-hill, who have hung up their Leather Breeches as a Monument of their former low Circumstances, but not that they used to saunter and trudge up and down in 'em, as Ornaments, when they had a pair of fresh Silk ones lying by 'em.

What you mean by your Natural and Preternatural Heats, I'm not concern'd about; I take the intense motions of the Affections towards GOD, to be this desirable Fervency in Prayer, Sorrow in Confessing Sin against him, Desires in Petitions, Joy in Thanksgivings, which Scripture calls, a pouring out the Soul and Heart before him, a *Δίνοις ἐνεργούμεν*, In-wrought Prayer, 5 Jam. 16. A loving and serving GOD with all our Heart and Strength, which is every ones Duty by the first Command. Now, That way of Praying that's most advantageous to this Fervency, let it be Form or Free, we count our selves obliged to use and humbly think no Power on Earth, hath just Authority to restrain this Liberty, any more than to give forth a Commandment that is contrary to the first in the Decalogue.

Now, that the Form, you violently impose Assent and Consent to in every thing, is Defective and Faulty in many, hath been shewn you a thousand times; that there is a better, you can't disprove; that 'tis the way to a Curse, not Blessing, to offer a worse, when we have a better, GOD's Word, 1 Mal. 13. tells us: Yet if we will not call Evil, Good, by approving the very Blemishes of yours, which in humble Modesty you have been Entreated to amend, but never would to this Day, but Tragically exclaim against us for Rebellion, Pride, Prejudice, Faction, &c. When we tell you from the best Experience we have of our selves (which is not to be Confuted by Ridiculing, or Railery) that we find an holy Fervency best promoted in and by Conceived Prayer; this you'll take upon you peremptorily to call Fancy, Phrensie, Enthusiasm, Feverish Fits of Hypocrisie, &c. Now under this Sentence of yours, we have nothing left

us, but an Appeal to the most just and final Tribunal, for a Decision.

But you will offer several Tests to try it by in the mean time. As,

First. What creates this Fervency; is it the Matter, or the newness and variety of the Words? If the Matter, then the same Matter would affect us in a Form, &c.

Ans. 'Tis true, all that is good, should Affect us; and if the fault were not in the Persons, you might keep to One old Sermon, and never study *new Phrases to surprise and strike briskly upon the Fancies of your Auditors*: But you know Men must be treated as they are. Besides, it may be, you may find, that Singing a Psalm always in one Tune, does not equally affect you, as Variety; and would you have an Order to confine you to One? Or, do you think 'tis meet for Governors to interpose their Authority in such a Matter? Besides, what if there be in the matter of a Form, a mixture of what your Judgment can't Approve? *as for Instance,* There is a great deal of Excellent Matter in the *Popish Mass Book*, but 'tis blended with such a Mixture, that we should take him but for a Luke-warm Protestant, that could be very Fervent at it. And 'tis I think, a great Cooling to stated Devotion, when a Christian's Mind suggests this doubt to him, Whether this be the best mode of Worship we can present him with, who is the best of Beings.

Second Rule to try Fervency by, is, the continuance of it: Now, say you, If it be true, 'tis as the Vestal Flame, that never goes out; the hot Fire is not followed by a Cold one, 'twill abide and keep up a constant heat of Love and Desire towards God. — and if it be not permanent, 'tis either a fit of Hypocrisie, or a Delusion of Imagination.

Ans. Here you are in your Altitudes. *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus*, was the Primitive Christians Motto: O that both you and we did more aspire after this Character, and at this rate, love, and live to the Infinitely Amiable Object! But I think this Rule should be laid down with more distinct Precaution; If you keep strictly to it, you will offend against the Generation of God's Righteous ones, such as *David*, *Solomon*, the *Angel of the Church of Ephesus*, who have too much and too long left their first Love, and cool'd in many Degrees of their Spiritual Fervency, and so left the World.

Thirdly, You ask me, *What Fruit doth the warmth of conceived Prayer produce?* &c. To all which, I shall only say, and leave it to the Judgment of any but your Concern'd selves, That if you really find your People sincerely affected with the soundness of the Matter of the *Liturgy*, which you have tried they do well understand; If you find, that the Warmth they feel as your Reading to 'em, *Abide with 'em as a Constant Flame of Love and Desire to GOD and his Word*; and this Dirty World does not re-possess their Hearts, and fill their Mouths when they are off their Knees; If the visible Effect of Attendance on your Form, be *Charity in Word and Deed towards one another*, and to those that Dissent from 'em, I shall unfeignedly rejoice; and would heartily Petition, that you might never have such an Unreasonable Imposition on you as this, *That you shall use Extempore Prayer in Publick Worship, and Administration of Sacraments, and None other.*

The Equity of this I would leave with the Consciences of any sort of Men but yours; And with Recommendation of the *Pagan Emperors Motto, Quod tibi*

tibi non vis, alteri ne feceris, Do not as thou would'st not be dealt with, at present give you the Farewell of,

S I R,

June 24.
1697.

Your Real Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER X.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

YOURS of April 29, pretends to justify the Impositions, and comes next to be Examined. You had cut out this Work for your self, without any Order of mine in the last, and you'll make it up in this; I see whether it be to the purpose or no, is none of your Concern, it will shew your Gift in Scribbling, and be of Advantage to some, who do not consider,

1st. 'Tis but an Evasion, or Excursion from the main things excepted against in your Sermon.

2. 'Tis Impertinent; for we grant that in it self, a Form is Lawful, to some needful, but you impose yours on all; though to make the People Blind, and us Odious, you represent us as Enemies to all *Forms*, to the *Lord's-Prayer* especially.

3. That there was *Renunciation of the Covenant*, (tho Ch. II. took it, and the Parliament that brought him in;) that there is *Assent and Consent* to all and every thing requir'd and contain'd in your Book.

There is also Re-ordination, and many other things that lye out of the Vulgar Road.

Forms of Prayer were not the matter in Dispute at the *Restoration*; yea, the *Imposition of the Reformed Liturgy*, we were so far from dreading, that we desired it. But if the many Additions to the *old Conformity*, would not lay us aside, the Men of your *Kidney* were resolv'd on such as should; such Charity was the Fruit of your Fervency. So that the Subject of this Letter of yours, does not concern the Subject of our Debate, (which is principally, whether *Extempore or Free-Prayer*, according to various Occasions, be a Gift desirable by Ministers, and whether it were introduc'd into these Kingdoms by *Romish Emissaries*, &c.) Yet, because I find here is *first* and *next*, and then an *Argument* to back either, it shall have a brief Animadversion.

First then, You'll consider, what Authority our Superiors have to command in these Matters, and who gave 'em this Authority: Next, what Obligation lyes on Subjects to obey and observe 'em. Now, in Answer to the first;

You had need tell us plainly, who you mean by Superiors; and, that because you are Divided in this Point among your selves: One part of the Disputers for the Church of England and Conformity, say, That the King is the External Civil Governor, but the Bishops are the Internal Governors of the Church, as a Church: And what if the King commands one Translation, Version, or Form of Prayer, and the Bishop another, whom must you Obey? What if the King signifie his Royal Pleasure to amend a faulty Liturgy, and Church Governors will not, who are most to be regarded? The King we Acknowledge, and his Officers; but Usurpation we mayn't encourage, by our Obedience. The Scriptures you mention under this Head, respect Church-Governors; Three hundred Years before the Christian Magistrate appeared in the World, and they under no pretence of Decency, or Order, or to preserve the Unity, Harmony and Reverence of Divine Worship, made

made a Form of Prayer the Matter of their Impositions.

2. Tell me, if you can, who or what Rulers they are, that *Christ* hath vested with such vast *Authority*, as to Command in such a manner an Invariable Form; Are they only such as are of your mind, or are they *Arminians*, *Papists*, *Greeks*, *Presbyterians*, &c. in their several Countries that have this Power? And, are you either for, or against a Form, according as the Climate is wherein you Breathe?

3. I see you lodge the Final Decision of what is Decent, expedient, yea, *Lawful* in these Matters, in the Breasts of *Superiors*. Indeed, in things confess'd Indifferent, the Judgment is readily allowed to our Superiors: But if the Question be about *Lawful* or *Unlawful*, we must have a *Judgment of Discretion* allowed us as to our Practice, unless we will turn *Papists*, and pay a blind Obedience; and one would think it a most reasonable Principle, that those should judge what is Sin, that are like to be Condemn'd, if they do commit it. However, you'll prove what you say by Dint of Argument, which runs thus;

Lawful things may be enjoin'd:

But Forms of Prayer are Lawful things. Ergo.

I Answer, 1. By Retortion. Lawful things may be enjoin'd.

But Spittle, Cream in Baptism, Crossing at the Eucharist, and abundance more such Popish Trumpery, are *lawful things. Ergo.*

The Major is yours; the Minor I prove thus;

Whatever is not forbidden or Countermanded by GOD himself (these are your own Words) is Lawful;

But Spittle, Cream, &c. are not forbidden, &c. Ergo.

Now, shew where these, and an hundred more such, are more *forbidden*, than the Cross in Baptism, or Kneeling at the other Sacrament.

I Answ. 2. By denying the *Major*, taken Universally, (as it must be, unless the Argument be vicious.) And do you not think it would make mad work in the World, should *Superiors* proceed according to this Rule, especially if, as you say, they must be Judges of what is Lawful.

I Answ. 3. To the *Minor*, by distinguishing, That some Forms of Prayer are Lawful, especially to some Persons, I Grant: That all Forms of Prayer are so, and to all Persons, I Deny. I think 'tis meet to give GOD the Best. I hope when you print your Argument, you'll prove it too.

But you proceed, In the next place then what Obligation is there upon Subjects to obey or observe these Injunctions?

Answ. Very strong, say you, and you mention several Scriptures, which whether they are to your purpose, must be tried by the Strength of the Argument that follows 'em, which is this, viz.

All Lawful Injunctions of our Governors are to be obeyed.

But the Injunction of Publick Forms is a Lawful Injunction. And therefore ought to be obeyed.

I Answ. 1. to the *Major* by Denying, Because as the *Apostle* replies, 1 Cor. 10. 23. All that is Lawful may not be Expedient, or may not Edify: And so conduce more to our own and others hurt, than Holiness and Happiness. Or the thing enjoin'd may be in its own Nature Trivial, and unfit for a Superior's Command, yet in your sense lawful. Bishop *Fewel* laughs at the *Papists* carrying Baskets from Palestine to Damascus; sitting a long time together silent; watering for several Months together a dead Tree, and all in obedience to Superiors Injunctions.

Do you think that a Command to keep your Eyes open in time of Prayer, is a proper Exercise of Governors Authority? However, a Command to have 'em

'em shut in Prayer, you will by no means vote to be convenient, though I can't see how you can prove it unlawful by your own Argument.

Query, Whether such an Injunction wou'd not silence as many of your Brave Men, as were of us, Bartholomew-Day, 1662; and whether you wou'd not Bitterly complain on't, as Pag. 88. you say, I do?

2. To the *Minor* (1.) *The Injunction of a Publick Form is lawful pro tempore*, and in the Churches Necessary, and Ministers present Incapacity, I grant: For future Generations, and on all Ministers eminently qualified to pray without 'em, I deny. (2.) *The Injunction of a Publick Form, including a Liberty to vary according to Providential Occurrences, I grant may be lawful*: Excluding this Liberty, and confining all Ministers to your Form in Publick Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and none other, I deny. (3.) *The Injunction of a Publick Form that is Scriptural, viz. containing nothing in it but what is agreeable to G O D's Word, is lawful*, I grant: That which is Defective, too General, containing many Doubtful things, &c. is *lawful*, I deny. (4.) *The Injunction of a Publick Form, where there is need, and with Moderation, I grant*: But to enjoin it with Assent and Consent to all and every thing contained in, and prescribed by it, and that under such intolerably disproportionable Penalties, as Silencing, Suspending, Excommunicating, Gaoling, Ruining Ministers and People that dare not use it, nor conform to it; that this is *lawful*, I utterly deny. And hath not this been the Case with us, under your pretended *Lawful Injunctions*? 'Tis not consider'd whether our Scruples are modest or immodest, nor what we judge lawful or unlawful; nor may we pick and chuse what we can use, and refuse the rest; but (as one saith) we must as Travellers on the Kings Highway, keep in the Road, and not break out here and there to escape any foul way: We must swallow all; 'tis not obedience to some things enjoin'd

in your Publick Forms, that will satisfy. Thus you'll make Governors G O D S, and Infallible, and make Subjects Brutes, under pretence of keeping 'em humble; but what doth this sort of arguing signify, only that you stand upon the higher ground, not that you have the better Cause? You are got above your Brethren, from whence you can look down with Scorn upon such as are more afraid of sinning than your selves.

I would not have you think I accuse former Governors, who it may be have been too ready to be *Lictors* for such as you; much less our Protestant Ones, who I would not have you to forget, have without asking your Leave, made a Law for the Protecting of us and our Assemblies, which you in humble Deference to that Law, ignominiously still call *Conventicles*; and in profound Respect to our Governors, (though you talk of Obedience) are still possessing the People, that we have only the Penalty suspended, whilst the Obligation of your Laws remains upon our *Consciences*: Where-to I shall only say now, (because I shall meet with it again in a following Letter, where it shall be largelier treated,) that the Law doth not only call our Liberty an *Allowance*, but also says that 'tis *for the Ease of Conscience*. Now the Suspension of the Penalty is for the Ease of our Backs and Purfes; but 'tis the taking off the Obligation, that is for the Ease of *Conscience*.

I am no great Admirer either of your Prudence or Charity in what follows, where you treat the *Vulgar* or common people so contemptuously, as caught with *Novelties*, led by *Fancy*, looking out for the strongest *Lungs*, and hunting for the best *Tone*, *Gadding* or *madding* after their own and others *Inventions*, &c. If this be indeed the Genius of the People, are not the Men of your Strain mad, that in such a Time of Liberty for People to chuse what Ministers they please, will come to no due Temper for Accomodation, nor abate any of your unreasonable

sonable Impositions, till many of your Churches be forsaken and left, (as Mr. Baxter told you) as the Ale-houses, which few Sober Persons haunt, or are Constant at, only now and then upon Occasion? But really, Sir, multitudes of the Common People have a quicker sight, and a better gust than you think they have, and the necessities of the most Ignorant do cry to you in this Language, *Ob, dont think that to read to us those words that our Children can read every day at home, or to make a formal Speech in a sleepy saying Tone once in a Week or Month, and go over the same again the next Year, is enough to Cure such Dark, Dead, Disaffected Souls as ours.*

You ask me whether I am so fond of Confusion, as to have a wide Door opened to it? (Because I would have Ministers that have the Ability, to pray without Book :) and whether I would have Superiors so little regard the Precepts that concern Order, Peace, and Unity, as to leave these Matters without such Impositions.

Ans. Since you will not, I will intreat the Reader to consider

(1.) Had not *Christ* and his *Apostles* as much Authority to Enjoin in those Matters as any now?

(2.) Did they not foresee, that there would be such People as have itching Ears, that would heap up Teachers, that there would be *Schisms and Divisions*? Therefore the *Holy Scriptures* were indited, but no *Liturgie* appointed. Had they judg'd this a necessary Expedient, or a desirable Means for Unity, can any reasonable Person think that those that were Inspired, and intrusted with the Delivery of the entire Rule both of Faith and Worship, would have omitted such an Advantage?

(3.) Have they not left us in one Chapter, *Rom. 14.* such Rules as would have put an end to this Controversy if attended to, and have restored and secured as much Peace and Unity as is necessary, and may be expected

expected in this Imperfect State; and are not the Advices there given as *Obligatory*, to, as any *Injunctions* of *Superiors*? But, Sir,

(4.) Don't the *Papists* teize you with your Disobedience and Schism, and tell you that there can never be any *Peace* and *Unity*, till you return into the Bosom of the *Church*, and submit to their *Impositions*? And the same *Cant* you use against the *Nonconformists* Perverseness in with-holding *Reverence* and *Obedience*, do they return upon you for you *Schism* from their *Forms* and *Subscriptions*.

When I told you *Scotland* was, and is, united without a *Liturgy*: Your Answer, I may abuse *Ignorant* and *Deluded People* by such shameless *Untruths*, &c. And you tell us of the *doleful Miseries* and *Distractions* of that unhappy *Kingdom*. Ans. Suppose this, they may thank,
(1.) The Impos'd *Prelacy* contrary to their *Genius* and *Constitution*.

(2.) The obtruded *Liturgy* by *Bishop Laud* and his *Faction*.

(3.) The *Debauchery* and bloody *Persecution* of the two *Late Reigns*. Though,

(4.) With what Front soever you write this upon the Credit of the Lies of a few *Profane Jacobite Clergymen* that are thence *Chashter'd*, whose Work it has been here, and there to imbroil us, yet 'tis very Considerable, that there are very few *Schisms* or *Heresies* in that *Kingdom*. And after all your *Clamours* against *Extempore Prayer*, you will never be able to disprove, that there was admirable *Concord* in *Doctrine* and *Worship* through the three *Nations* when the *Liturgy* was forborn; (Though those who were then uppermost conniv'd at *Railing* at the *Ministry*, and *foul-mouth'd Blasphemies* for their own *Ends*.)

But, Sir, don't you easily see how those whose Turn it is now to be the *Church Established* in that *Kingdom*, may turn your own *Artillery* upon you, and talk to
your

your *Disaffected Brethren* in the same Strain as you do to us; and tell 'em that *all the Distractions and Divisions in that Church are to be put upon the Score of their Disobedience?* May not they be as *Liberally Characteriz'd* as *stubborn unquiet Schismaticks*, as we are by you now; yea, as you your selves may be too, if any thing in another Century should happen to be required of any of you which you think unlawful?

When I desir'd you to *Petition our Governors* (or rather askt you why you wou'd not if you were such *Cordial Lovers of Peace*) for the removal of the Causes of our Divisions;

You Answer, That you *have learn'd more Manners than to Direct and Prescribe to them, &c.* I Reply, We do indeed feel what *Civil Gentlemen you Active Consermists* are, (though we know there are many worthy Men among you *Passive*, who wish these things remov'd;) your good Breeding would prompt you fast enough to incite them to Execution, but you have *too good Manners* to invite 'em to a *Comprehension*. We know, Sir, what we have or do suffer is justly to be imputed to the Designs and Wills of such as you. Our *Superiors* are favourable, and would be more, but you obstruct all Designs of *Peace and Concord*.

As for our Removal into *Scotland*, when you have *Petition'd our Governors*, and prevail'd with 'em to reverse the *Gracious Act* for our Liberty, (which yet we hope and pray you'll never be able to do) 'twill be time enough to talk of it; only you'll easily pardon it if we do conclude, that though it be no *better Manners*, yet you have a *better Mind* to such a Petition than the other.

The last *Fetch*, you say, I have against *Enjoining of Forms*, is, that though the *Magistrate* thinks these things *indifferent*, we judge 'em to be *unlawful*, and so his *Judgment* is to be laid aside, &c. Thus you frame Words for me contrary to my Thoughts, that you may go
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on, and say, *An excellent way indeed to set up your selves above your Superiors, and to obey only what you please; 'tis but for you to think that a Command is unlawful, and then you have a Dispensation, &c.*

Ans. When we have read, conferr'd, pray'd for many Years, and can do no other than, judge your *Declarations, Subscriptions, total Conformity unlawful*, what wou'd you have us do? Must we swallow all against the best Judgment we can make? This, Sir, is *Excellent Doctrine*, and wou'd have done special Service in *Queen Mary's Days*; yea, 'twill now bear a Man's Charges through all the *Popish and Turkish Territories*, and is admirably fitted to *Sacrifice Conscience to the Deity of Hobb's Leviathan*.

But, you say, *as for things plainly forbidden by the Law of GOD, we may so far trust to the Care and Integrity of our Governors, as not to fear the enjoining of 'em.* *Ans.* Ay, Sir, If they are sincere *Protestants as at present*, but this is the Argument you have trusted to for near forty Years; yet you know when you began to distrust Him whom your Doctrine of *Non-resistance and Passive-obedience* had made your *Supream Governor in all Causes*. We can indeed much more trust our Governors than many *Clergymen*; yea, at this time I have a considerable Confidence that our *Protestant King and his Parliament* wou'd soon be the *Healers of our Wounds, and Restorers of Unity on lasting Foundations*, did not the Men of your Stamp obstruct it (what you'll get by it, and what Comfort you'll find in it, Time will shew, and we will wait). But in Conclusion you give us this Comfort, *If what Governors command be plainly forbidden by the Law of GOD, then we have a good Dispensation from obeying 'em.* *Ans.* But say I, as you, p. 114. *Who shall be Judge of that? Will the Romapists, or any Imposers in Christendom? Will the French King in his Dragooning way of Conversion grant you, that we be Judges, whether what he enjoyns be plainly forbidden*

den or no? Will he not tell you, and his *Parastical* Clergy second him, that 'tis plainly commanded that you obey your *Superiors*, and the *Private Conscience* must submit to the *Publick* one, or 'twill be everlasting Confusion, and whether it be in *Substantials* or *Circumstantials*, 'tis much at one. They judge the Ruin of *Protestants* to be good and profitable to the *Publick*, as you do the Ruin of *Nonconformists* and *Superiors*, (you may be sure) where the final Decision of these Matters lodges, will never be in the wrong.

I have been the larger on this, that I may the more briefly dispatch my Remarks on several of your following Letters, where the same things occur. I am,

S I R,

Yours,

June 28. 1697.

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER XI.

To Mr. H——.

S I R,

IN yours of *May 6.* (dateless in your Print) I find you'll still forget what the Matter in Debate between us is, and therefore I must remind you. 'Tis not, whether it is lawful to Compose a *Form of Prayer*; nor yet to use it either in *Private* or *Publick*; no, nor yet to Impose it upon some, who either through Ignorance or Laziness, are not fit to be trusted without such a Guide in *GOD's Publick Service*, when the Circumstances

Circumstances of the Church are such that there are no better to be had.

But whether your *Form of Prayer* may be impos'd upon all Ministers, and they tied up to the Words and Syllables, so as not to vary from them in *Publick Prayer, &c.* as by Canon 36. they solemnly promise, and are oblig'd to do; and can have no Station in the Church of England without such an *Ex Animo Subscription*; yea, not only so, but all Ministers must Assent and Consent to all and every thing in it, &c. This is impos'd upon all Ministers, whose Gifts are known, and their Diligence and Conscience in this Duty sufficiently experimented. Now such Confinement we say (with Bishop W.) is the way to necessitate 'em to a *Continual Imposency*. 'Tis true, the Ablest Ministers may be so disorder'd through Bodily or Spiritual Distemper, as may oblige 'em to a Form; but because a Staff may be useful for an old wither'd Body, yea for a lively one that hath accidentally got some Vertigo in the Head, or Wound in the Foot, it does not thence follow, nor is it reasonable that it should be Enacted that none should walk without one. Now this being the State of the Controversy, to what purpose is this, or several other of your Letters? Yet let me take a little notice of it: And,

First, You say, Forms are Helps of Impotency: Ans. So say I too, for some and in some Cases. But you go on, *They are necessary ever since the Days of Inspiration, and will be so to the Worlds end. Ans.* So I doubt they will to not a few; but still this does not reach the Point; why must those that can pray without 'em be tied up to 'em? *Why, because GOD Almighty hath appointed Forms in the Old Testament, and in the New, John taught his Disciples to pray, and our LORD's Prayer is a Form, and his Apostles enjoyn'd some things, bid us to mind and speak the same things, and to walk by the same Rule, &c.* This is the Sum of what you say
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in this matter. But *first*, you have never yet prov'd, or ever can; that the *Jewish Church* had a stinted *Liturgy* prescrib'd by GOD; but instead of this 'tis obvious to all that read 'em, that the most of the Prayers Private and Publick, that are on Sacred Record, are *Conceiv'd and Free* according to the Occasions, as in the several Instances. But suppose there were in any particular Cases a *Form* of Words recommended by GOD, of whose Authority, Ability, Fidelity, none make a Question, Will it follow that weak and fallible Men may prescribe a Form invariable? We heartily use any Form that can be prov'd GOD will have us use.

Besides, there is a more plenteous *Effusion* of the Gifts as well as *Graces* of the Spirit under the *New Testament*, than there was under the *Old*.

2. It remains to be prov'd, either that *John's Disciples* were Ministers of *Christ*, see *Matth. II. II.* or that when they were Improv'd in the Knowledge of the Doctrine of the *Messiah*, they were tied up to Words and Syllables in Prayer; (when we give our Children *Forms of Prayer*, we expect at Years of Understanding and Consideration, they should pray without 'em.)

3. You say, *Christ taught his Disciples a Form of Prayer*. What then? Therefore ordinary Persons may impose; how doth it follow? Is there no difference 'twixt *Christ's Authority* and *Man's*? *Christ's Form* is a part of the *Sacred Canon* into which our Faith is resolv'd. We are ready to be tied up to any *Form*, to any thing of *Christ's Injunction*. Did *Christ* enjoin his *Twelve Apostles* to pray thus, or after this manner, and is there the same Reason that the same Words, and no other, *conceiv'd and Compos'd* by two or three Bishops or Ministers should be impos'd upon Ten thousand Ministers for a Hundred Years, and at last all Ministers be obliged to Assent and Consent to all and every thing in 'em, as if
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GOD had deliver'd the *Book of Common-Prayer*, as he did the *Decalogue* to Moses from Heaven, immediately written with his own Finger?

4. But the *Apostles* enjoin'd some things: *Ans.* True, such as did appear to the *Holy Ghost*, and to them (inspir'd by him) necessary, *Acts* 15. 28, 29. But why do you omit Fornication in your Quotation of this *Scripture*, when you had it in your Letter to me; unless that you are loath to speak out, that the Church hath as much Power to enjoin set Forms, as to forbid *Fornication*? But this is the *Biggottry* of some Men for indifferent things, whilst the weighty matters of GOD's Law are not regardable: Just like those whom *Socrates* the Historian tells of, *Lib. 5. c. 21.* *That held Fornication a thing indifferent, but tugg'd for an Holy-Day as if their Lives had lain on't.*

Well! here are Inspired Persons that impose things necessary, but you who are not Inspired impose things unnecessary, and on heavy Penalties; where's the Consequence? Further, the Apostle would have us *mind and speak the same things*; this is most true also in the Apostle's Sense, which is only an *Unity* in the Matter and Substance of Religion, not in *Words and Syllables*, expressing our Conceptions about it either to GOD or Men. Can any in their Senses conclude from hence, that in all Families and Closets the same Form must be used; or that all Ministers must have the same Words and Sentences in Preaching, and in all Religious Discourses, because they are bid *to mind and speak the same things*? What a silly Abuse is this of *Scripture*? Nay, is it not most evident from such an *Exhortation of the Apostle*, that there was no *prescribed Form* then deliver'd to, and us'd by the *Church*? For what need wou'd there have been of this Advice *to speak the same thing*, if there had been a *Common-Prayer-Book*; that would have held 'em close enough to it, and there was no danger of varying?

So we are to walk by the same Rule: True, still, but you had need to tell us whether the Rule were a Divine, or an Humane One, whether it be any other than the Sacred Canon, or Rule of Scripture, which was set and prescrib'd indeed, for the Rule of Prayer, and the LORD's Prayer for a Special Directory; But we can find no Liturgy propos'd, much less impos'd, least of all, on all Ministers without any Variation: To all that read the Scriptures attentively, 'twill appear that they spoke then in the Matters of GOD, as Men do in other Matters, with a Natural Plainness and Seriousness, suiting their Expressions to the Subjects and Occasions; 'twas from GOD's Word, the Spirits ordinary Assistance, and their own Endeavours, that this Impotency in Prayer was Relieved, but not by a prescribed Form.

2: You frequently tell us, *There must be such a Form for Unity, and to prevent Schisms and Divisions, and that all Men may be acquainted with what they offer unto GOD in Publick Worship, without which they can't agree in their Petitions.* To which I

Ans. (1.) Why should you pretend to be wiser than Christ and his Apostles? There were Disorders and Divisions then, whilst they had Gifts extraordinary, as among the Corinthians; but where is there any such Liturgy appointed for their Cure? If this had been thought necessary can you think that our LORD, who was faithful in all his House, or his Apostles who were Commission'd by him, would have left future Ages to endless Quarrels, for want of so cheap a Remedy, which would have silenc'd all Disputes for ever? They certainly knew the best way of Peace and Unity, but they knew not ours, nor any other Liturgy, much less such an one as must be us'd, and no other: But you must have a means for Unity, viz. Uniformity, which never came into Christ's Mind, nor his Apostles

nor *Primitive Christians* for the first Three hundred Years and more after him, as shall appear hereafter: Now when Men are *wise above what is written*, and violently urge their own Injunctions, they use to lose the way of Peace, yea, make Desolation on the pretence of making Peace.

2. To your Common Plea, *That all Men must be acquainted with what they offer to GOD in Publick Worship, that they may say Amen and Agree.*

I Ans. (1.) What think you then of those many thousand Conformists at the Restoration, that declar'd their Unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and every thing in the Book of Common-Prayer, before they could see what was added, what was altered, &c.?

(2.) Why don't you Distribute your Books on Humiliation and Thanksgiving Occasions, first among your People, that they may be acquainted with what they offer to GOD, and may know before-hand what they must say Amen to? This you take no Care in, and therefore shew you account it no valuable Objection against Free Prayer, and for your Forms.

(3.) Take the Answer in Bishop Wilkins's Words, G. of P. p. 12. *Whereas 'tis commonly objected by some, that they can't so well join in an unknown Form, with which they are not before-hand Acquainted. I Answer, That's an Inconsiderate Objection, and does oppose all kinds of Forms that are not publickly prescribed: As a Man may in his judgment Assent unto any Divine Truth delivered in a Sermon, which he never heard before, so he may join with his Affections unto any holy desire in a Prayer, which he never heard before: If he who is the Mouth of the rest, shall through Imprudence deliver that which we can't approve of, GOD does not look upon it as our Prayer if our Desires do not say Amen to it.*

You have been much commending a Form of Prayer because in it we know before-hand what we offer to GOD; but what if we know in any Form many Defects

Defects and Disorders which we can't, and others won't mend; If we believe there are several dubious Things enjoin'd in several Offices, and some things tending to the Hardning and Soul-ruin of some that have an extraordinary Veneration for it, is not this a great Discouragement to Devotion in it, or Attendance on it? 'Tis not talking of our *Pride, Self-conceit, &c.* that will give any Satisfaction to it.

The rest of your Letter is diverting your self with my *fine Simile's* as you call 'em, viz. *Spectacles and Crutches*, which you'll prove fit Matter for an Universal Imposition: As these do use to be some of the *feeble Sports of decayed Nature*; so it hath been and will be further prov'd, that stinted *Liturgies were substituted* in the room of *decayed Graces*, and were the Issues of Times of Darkness and Degeneracy among *Christians*. Blindly and lamely you talk of these; I shall with one Glance dispatch 'em.

1. I ask you again, is it just that because some are purblind or weakighted, all should have a (yea one) Pair of Spectacles impos'd on 'em? Here, I can't envy others the Satisfaction that they find in your Answer, especially in your pertinent Explaining and Applying Scripture to your purpose, as 1 Cor. 13. 12. *We see through a Glass darkly*, from whence I find you arguing, *that if such quicksighted Persons (as the Apostles) stood in need of such Glasses, (as Forms) to help their Eyesight, now the World is grown elder, none should disdain to use 'em; certainly they are stark blink, past the help of Spectacles, that don't see the strength of such Ratiocination.*

2. Because some are *Lame or Lazy*, should Crutches be impos'd on all for their Sakes? This is Bishop W.'s Simile, p. 11. where he tells us, That no one, and therefore not Ministers should satisfy themselves with Book-Prayer, and go no further, this were still to remain in Infancy; all should grow in Gifts as well as Graces, else 'tis

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always

always making use of Crutches, &c. Now whether this be not more Rational, than what you infer from, *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall, &c.* I shall leave to others Judgment.

Only I'll remind you that you grant Forms are *helps of Insufficiency*, and 'twas the Insufficiency and Weakness of the Clergy that made the necessity of both these *Crutches, Liturgies and Homilies* at the Reformation; now we do see you are grown so strong, that you can lay aside, yea despise one of your *Crutches*, 'tis to be hop'd that in time you may go alone, but 'tis to be fear'd you won't be over-hasty to try; no, that's a dangerous thing: I have read when Pope *Adrian VI.* was press'd by the *German Princes* to a Reformation of the Clergy; he gravely answer'd that 'tis true a Reformation was necessary, yet the Danger of Reforming all at once was so dreadful, that he resolv'd to proceed Step by Step; and wise Men thought he would deliberate a hundred Years 'twixt every Step he took; and all moderate Men conclude that you will not break your Shins for haste in a Work of this Nature; for (whether from want of Eyes, or Legs, or Hearts) you have not taken one Step except backward for these hundred Years, and yet you count you are arriv'd at a State of Perfection.

You conclude with several Falsities, as that *I say GOD is better serv'd with the Barbarisms of conceiv'd Prayer, than &c.* that I make loud out-cries about silencing Brave Men, for not using Forms of Prayer, when I never gave the Men that Epithet, nor that as the Reason of their Silencing. That you would penitently reflect on, and reform this is the desire of,

S I R,

Your Friend and Servant,

June 29
1697.

J. M.

Answer

ANSWER TO LETTER XII.

To Mr. H —.

S I R,

YOURS of May 12. begins with a *Falsity or Fallacy*, and I don't question but we shall find it's Progress answerable. First then the enjoining of Forms hath stopt the Mouths of many Hundreds of Ministers, &c. To this you say well! *but how was this done? I hope there was no Violence used in stopping their Mouths.* No, Sir, 'twas no Silencing by Violence, *Naturally*, nor by Persuasion or Reason, *Morally*, but by an *Act* (by what Arts obtain'd, I shall after tell you) whereby we were declared *Dead, Legally*: But how *False or Fallacious* is it, to say that the meer Enjoining of Forms did it? For there was never a word spoken against a *Liturgy*, or *Set Forms of Prayer*, only Emendations desired, and Additions of several Forms with a Liberty of using one or t'other. Yet you proceed, they silenc'd themselves by *Refusal of those Publick Prayers which many of 'em had used, most of 'em judg'd lawful to be us'd, and all of 'em might have us'd* (Ay! whether they judg'd 'em lawful or no) *if they pleas'd.* Here, how do you baffle your own Conscience, and blind the People by a most partial and unfair Representation of our Case? for whatever part of the *Publick Prayers* any of those Two thousand Ministers that were Silenc'd *had us'd, or judg'd lawful to be us'd, none of 'em could Assent and Consent to all and every thing contain'd in them.* The Law is peremptory, and the Conformity must be total.

There was no *Preaching nor Praying Publickly*, unless a *Solemn Covenant was Renounc'd, and declared of no Obligation,*

gation, not only upon such as never had taken it, but also on those that had, (King Charles II. himself, and the Parliament included :) And though all the things engag'd against were virtually comprized in our *Baptismal Covenant*, (as *Error, Schism, Profaneness, Idolatry, &c.*) the English Prelacy except'd.

There was no *Preaching nor Praying Publickly* without making this *Solemn Declaration*, viz. *That 'tis unlawful upon any Pretence whatever to take Arms against the King, or any Commissionated by him, &c.* There is no *Preaching nor Praying publickly*, unless those Ministers that were Ordain'd formerly, when there were no Bishops in England, or since by Senior Ministers, will submit to a Second Ordination, which they can see no more reason for, than for *Rebaptization*, and when you are so kind to a *Papish Priest* that he need not be Re-ordain'd. Finally, you say, *we must hold our Tongues if we will not Assent to the Truth, and Consent to the Use (and Goodness) of what is duly Establish'd;* (This is plainly and honestly Asserted) for, shall Men say one thing, and think another; and play the Hypocrites in GOD's Publick Worship? No Sir, these Oaths, Subscriptions, and Declarations; are Edge-Tools, and none but fear'd Consciences will jest with 'em. But have you read over attentively all those Books that you Assent and Consent to, and well weighed all the things contain'd in 'em, and are you so fully satisfied in the Truth and Goodness of 'em all, as to declare it before GOD and the World? Let me Instance in a few;

Can you Assent to the Truth of a false Rule to find Easter by, though Contained in, and Establish'd by your Kalender?

Can you shew where 'tis Certain from the Word of GOD, that Children of Infidels or Sadducees, of which there are abundance at this time Baptized, Dying before they commit actual Sin; are undoubtedly saved? Yet this you Assent and Consent to.

Is it a thing worthy to be *Approved*, to deny *Baptism* to all those Children whose Parents are not satisfied in *Godfathers*, &c. (undertaking what they never mean to perform) nor in the *Sign* of the Cross? Or to reject those from the other *Sacrament*, who refuse Kneeling for fear of Scandalizing the *Papists*?

Have you any Ground from *GOD's Word* either to stretch your *Charity* so wide, as to the hardning of Multitudes of Sinners by your Pronouncing all whom you Bury, blessed? And on the other hand to Cramp it so, as to *Assent* and *Consent* to the *Damnatory Sentence* in the *A:banasian Creed*?

Do you count it is worthy your *Approbation*, and *Assenting* to, to publish all those *Excommunications* according to your *Canons*, that are decreed by *Lay-Chancellors* against all that do say there is any thing repugnant to the *Scripture* in the *Liturgy*, or any thing not to be *Approv'd* in the *Rites* and *Ceremonies*?

Do you *Assent* to the Truth of those *Stories* in the *Publick Lessons* out of *Judith*, *Tobit*, *Bel and the Dragon*, which you are to read from *Sept. 28.* to *Nov. 24.* or to the *Additions* to the *Original*, the *Mistranslations* of the *Psalms*?

You do *Consent* to say *Morning* and *Evening Service* every Day in the Year, not being let by *Sickness* or other *urgent Cause*, and don't you consent to one thing and practise another? These are not the tenth part of what you *Assent* to the Truth, and *Consent* to the Goodness of, and justify, which others of your Brethren do mince and qualify, and say 'tis to the *Use* only, but yours is to the *Truth*.

And whereas you say, This is no hard thing, nor Burthen upon Conscience, and that all the *Reformed Churches* exact as much.

Ans. (1.) Produce any such Terms, such *Declarations* required of any *Protestant Church* in *Christendom*. In the mean time, (2.) 'Tis too evident there are Consci-

ences so brawny, that will feel nothing, and Throats so large as to swallow any thing.

But as for us you say, we are *Silenc'd by the Law of GOD as well as Man*. By your Laws I know we were, yea more than Silenc'd, Banish'd from *Corporations*, and by your Will should be so still: But GOD's Law never stopp'd our Mouths, and the last Voice of Man's Law hath open'd 'em.

However you ask me, *Did not the Earth open its Mouth, and Silence those that speak against Moses and Aaron, who all perished in the Gainsaying of Core, and have not many fallen upon their Governors, speaking Evil of Dignities, and Slandering the Footsteps of GOD's Anointed?* And you conclude, *That Christ himself hath Commanded that if any neglect to hear the Church, that is, to obey the good Orders of it, he must be thrust out of it, and esteem'd but as an Heathen-man and a Publican.* Ans. *Scriptures wisely and charitably applied!* But,

(1.) Is it just to charge the whole Body of the Nonconformists as guilty of such Crimes, and prove it against never an one of the *Individuals*? If it be enough to Accuse, who can be Innocent? Or

(2.) Were any of these things prov'd against the Two thousand that did not, more than against the Seven or Eight thousand that did *Conform*?

(3.) If any had been prov'd, was there no lighter, nor more proper Punishment than Silencing, to the probable Ruin of many thousand Souls; and where an *Act of Oblivion* too had interven'd?

(4.) You had need give us the true Notion of Church you so harp on; whether it be that of Bishop *Laud's Faction*, or that which the *Jacobites* Glory in their Adherence to, or King *William's*, of which the Nonconformists take themselves to be a true and valuable Part, though there are some *Orders* of it that they can't think good, nor Conform to?

(5.) When

(5.) When you will not, or cannot use *Christ's Discipline*, why will you Abuse his Words? For you thrust us out, and *ipso facto* Excommunicate us, without any private Hearing, or publick Admonition, according to his good order.

And whether there were no *Hardship in our Case*, some Excellent Conformists have told the World; and let any judge, when they have read Mr. *Baxter's Life*, where they'll find the unfairest Treatment that ever was met with at Brethrens hands. Our Divines then offered to submit to Arch-Bishop *Usher's Primitive Form of Episcopacy*, to a *stated Liturgy*, and drew up a most Excellent one for that purpose; which for Aptness and Gravity of Expressions, for Coherence and Method, and suitableness to the *Emergencies of humane Life*, was incomparably beyond the old one; which was not Excepted against, but Contemn'd. That whole Affair was transacted by the Silencing Clergy, after an *Impetuous and Disdainful manner*, that would yield to nothing for Accomodation, and only desir'd to know what we would stick at, that they might be sure to throw us out. And when a sober Gentleman shew'd some Regret, that the Door was too strait for many Ministers Admission, a Dignified Clergyman replied, 'Twas no pity at all; adding, *Had we thought so many of 'em would have Conform'd, we would have made it straiter.*

Having occasion to mention to you the *Reformed Liturgy*, you tell me, *It seems, I would have the Ancient one laid aside as an Almanack out of Date.* No, Sir, keep it till you are weary, but don't famish all in an Hospital, whose Throats are too narrow to swallow so big a Morfel as you can; but when you have new Prayers once or twice a Year, on *Extraordinary Occasions*, methinks you need not dread a *new Liturgy*, more than a *new Almanack*: (and here by the bye, 'tis a little unlucky, that the *New Almanack* this Year, speaks the falshood of your Rule in the old *Liturgy*, to find *Easter* by;

by; Yet all and every thing contain'd in it, must be Assented to; And is it not very fit Men should Assent to the Truth? (What! of that which is False) if once duly Established.) You ask, Whether I have never heard what ill things have been done under pretence of Reformation?

Ans. No doubt 'tis extream Dangerous! the taking out one rotten Pin of a Ceremony, will shake the whole Ecclesiastical Fabrick. So Arch-Bishop *Whitgift* makes a Doleful Complaint to *Q. Elizabeth*, when the Parliament talk'd of Reforming Pluralities, as if they had been consulting the Church's Dissolution; and I find, one of the main Reasons against all Alterations in order to Union, to be this; That as some might come in, so others in Communion, might take Offence, and desert and fall off to the Church of Rome. Sure those Men have tender Tempers towards their Brethren, who Subscribe the same Doctrinal Articles with them, and of true and steady Principles, that 'tis pity but they were humour'd. But where's the Church's Excessive Charity towards Protestants, when the Papists have been so many times and ways, Gratified? In *Q. Elizabeth's* time, by leaving that out of the Litany, From the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable Enormities, Good LORD deliver us. In *K. James the First's* time, when the Spanish Match was on foot, 'twas great Condescension to cause the English Liturgy to be translated into Spanish, by a Franciscan, that the Similitude of the English and Spanish Service, might obviate a main Objection, and facilitate the Enterprize. In *K. Charles the First's* time, how many steps were taken towards Rome, the Writer of Bishop *Laud's* Life will tell us; of which, more after, when I come to your Romish Emissaries. But now, O the mischief of Innovations? Next, 'twill be O the good, whilst Men resolve and Covenant against Reformation! But so is the Pagan World kept in Idolatry, because they will not admit of Novelties: So is the Antichristian Kingdom secured in Ignorance and Superstition, to avoid the Blot of Inconstancy.

You

You say, *We were Silenc'd, and must be silent, to preserve Order, Peace and Unity.*

But pray, Sir, What do you mean by *Peace*? I presume, not the *Devil's Peace*, for whilst he keeps possession of the Souls of Men, by *Ignorance, Worldliness, Debauchery, and Malignity*, all is in *Peace*: And so *Elijah* was a *Troubler of Prophane Idolatrous Abab and Israel*; but to be *peaceable* in *Wickedness*, is the pav'd way to *Destruction*; and to be *united* in it, is an *Hellish Combination*. We are fully satisfied, that your *Impositions* will never be the foundation of a true *Peace*, whilst an *English Bible* is in *Peoples hands*; and the *Desirableness* of *Peace*, must be judg'd of by its tendency to the *Salvation of Souls*, and to the *promotion of Piety and Purity*, (not of any prevalent Party.) Now, if you are resolv'd to have no *Peace*, we can't procure nor secure it against your *Wills*. Though *Unity in Affection and Judgment*, is a beauteous thing; yea, *Uniformity* too, as to the same *Solemn Time*, the same *Acts of Worship*, and as to the manner of *Prayer*. But (as one saith) *That pitiful thing call'd Uniformity in Words and Syllables, and Phrases, was never desired by GOD, nor Accepted with him; nor is there any more beauty in it, than would be in a Congregation where all Men wear the same colour'd Cloaths on their Backs, or had the same Lines in their Faces, or the same fashion'd Periwig on their Heads.*

You tell me, *I have forgotten the Silencing of the Regular Clergy in the Great Rebellion.* But,

(1.) By whom was this done? Had the *Non-conformists* any more hand in it than the *Conformists*?

(2.) On what Account was it done? Read *White's Centuries*, and judge, whether the most were not laid aside for *Irregularities, Insufficiency, Immorality*; Was this the Case with us?

(3.) Was that *Silencing* by *Usurpers*, well or ill done? If ill, does it deserve your *Imitation*?

(4.) Did

(4.) Did not those that were then turn'd out at one Place, ordinarily get into another, or else they had a Fifth part of the Publick Maintenance allowed 'em; Was this our Lot? However, you say, *Certainly — never any Persons in any Age, were more justly Silenc'd.*

When I would have you *put your selves in our Case*, Suppose that you had Studied and Prayed, and done your best to know whether you might comply with these Terms, consent to these Forms, make these Declarations, Subscriptions, or no, and having done all, you think GOD would be Displeased, Conscience Wounded, if you should, Would you be content to be us'd your selves in this manner, to be Silenc'd, and expos'd to Reproach and Ruin? You give me a sad Answer, but one very agreeable to your Sense and Conscience, *viz. That no doubt any Offenders would willingly escape unpunished, and all are so fond and tender of themselves, as to desire to escape, &c.* But should there be ever any thing that you count Unlawful, requir'd of you, would it be a Crime in you, and Partiality, and Self-love, when on the best judgment you can make, you are Innocent, to desire Impunity? This is some of Dr. Fulwood's good Natur'd Doctrin on a former Indulgence, *viz. That 'tis a signal owning of Schism, to desire to escape the penalties of the Laws, &c.* To which, Mr. Baxter Answers, *Now you speak Sense, we feel your Meaning; 'tis a Crime worthy the name of Schism, to desire to be unpunished, when you desire our Punishment; we do not toto Pectore Telum recipere: 'Tis Schism for us to be unwilling to be Hang'd or Burnt, if you desire it — The Penalty of Poverty and losing all Ministerial Maintenance, we never escaped since you succeeded us; Mr. Norman, and Mr. Allein, and almost all that were Silenc'd at first, are gone, and did not escape the Penalty.*

This is your Sense still, and then may be expected what follows, *viz. If these Men then were so justly Silenc'd by the Law of GOD and Man, how come they to Speak a-*
gen,

gen, and in Conventicles too? Sure they have no Warrant nor Authority. — Though the Penalty be Suspended, yet their obligation to Silence, still Continues. — What then? — Why, the People strike 'em upon the Back, and encourage 'em.

I Answer; We can shew you greater Authority, and better Reason for our Preaching, than the Peoples Encouragement. As,

(1.) We look on it as *Sacrilege*, to alienate Consecrated Persons from the Work to which they are Ordain'd: And, if we have observ'd, that *Impropietators* don't use to Thrive in many Generations, how will such *Deserters* as we?

(2.) The Word of GOD, lays an indispensable Obligation upon us, *Matt. 28. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 9. 14. 16. Eph. 4. 10, 11, 12. 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2, &c.* which tie our Consciences with such a Knot, as your *Chancellors Excommunications* can't cut or dissolve.

(3.) We have a Law not only to permit our Preaching, but to allow it, and to protect our Persons and Assemblies, which is a great *Encouragement*, though you know, we still counted it our Duty to Preach as we had Ability and Opportunity, and could keep out of your hands and Gaols. This Law is with you as the Trojan Horse, that hath brought among you all sorts of Mischiefs in the Bowels on't; and therefore now, when by reason of this Act, the Instruments of Destruction are dropt out of your hands, this fine Distinction drops from your Pens, *viz. That though the Penalty be suspended, yet the Obligation of the Laws continue*, and 'tis only a *Toleration*, and we have no Commission from Heaven, to Preach; and there are many of you that very civilly Arraign the Government on this Point, as having done what it cannot justify: To which I say,

1. The word *Toleration*, about which they kept such a Noise, is not in the *Act of Liberty*, from the beginning to the end; but it saith, *our Assemblies so Certified,*

are

are allowed by this Act. Now, if our Legislators call it an Allowance, do you call it a bare Suspension of Penalty, and Criticize on the word Toleratation as long as you please, we are not concern'd in it. I have known the time when you did use to Construe all the words of an Act in the most beneficial Sense for the suppression of Conventicles; And I believe, the words of this are to be construed in the most favourable Sense, for the ease of scrupulous Consciences, and for the uniting of His Majesty's Subjects in Interest and Affection.

2. If we will believe our Senses, this Law amounts to more than a bare Suspension of the Penalty; it allows our Congregations, it guards 'em from Disturbance, laying a Penalty on such as shall presume to give it, it exempts Ministers from serving in any Secular Offices, which is a sort of Reward.

3. If it were no more than a bare Suspension of the Penalty, yet 'tis enough to prove 'em void of any Obligation on our Consciences to Obedience, because they are merely Penal Laws, that is, such as require things that are no way apt to promote the common good: You that say they are, are oblig'd to prove it; and till we see such Demonstration, we shall never Sense your pretended Obligation: That the Publick Good is not concern'd in 'em, will more appear in what follows.

4. As we have the Law both of GOD and Man for our Preaching, so the notorious Necessities of thousands of Souls call for it: Notorious I say, by reason of Ignorance, Sensuality, Debauchery, the Stepping-stones lay'd in the two late Reigns, to introduce Popery. First. Have you ever tried multitudes that come to Church and say aloud the Prayers, whether they understand 'em, or so much as one Petition in the Lord's Prayer, or whether they do not as Parrots, rest in the utterance of the Words? Now, if it be too true of many, that they do not understand; either saying over the words, will save Peoples Souls, or it will not. If it will, Christianity is a Spell

Spell, or a Charm of empty Words; and why will not the mumbling of the *Masi* do as well? If it will not, there is need of more Ministers, and more Teaching than you do or can afford 'em. (2.) Don't you see, or hear multitudes of *Swearers, Railers, Drunkards, filthy Persons, Hypocrites, Worldlings, Proud ones, Infidels, Formalists*, that make Mammon their GOD, and Gain, Godliness? Either you know this to be a common Case, or no; if you do not, you are a Stranger to *England*, and scarce awake; If you do, don't you also know, How difficult the Cure of any of these is; and what a Task 'tis to make any Better, Wiser, and more Heavenly? and if you do think 'tis necessary to be Better, methinks you should not thank G O D, that there's no need of more Ministerial Help, or of but such as ours.

But I expect to all this you'll say, and you do say it Twenty times over, *That 'tis our Pride and Vanity, and Conceit of our selves, that makes us look on our selves as needful.*

Ans. But really, Sir, we fear 'twould be Hypocritical Modesty to suffer so many Souls to perish, whose Necessities call for our best Assistance, for fear of overvaluing our selves, and undervaluing some of you (who I could wish, did not by their Lives, betray themselves to the Peoples Scorn.) This Modesty and Humility you so much recommend to us, will not satisfy the Hungry that cry for wholsom Food, nor save the miserable Souls of Men. And,

(5.) It can't be denied, nor conceal'd; by, or from Englishmen, that have Eyes and Ears, that there are no *Supernumeraries*, but a great Defect of *painful faithful Ministers in England*; and whether the Imposition of such a stinted Form, be not some occasion of it, and hath no tendency to it, must be the next Enquiry of

S I R,

June 30. 1697.

Your real Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER

ANSWER TO LETTER XIII.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

I Have had such Trial of you, that I can't wonder a Notorious Falsity begins your Letter, and yet under pretence of Reproving *false and impudent Calumnies; and Railing Accusations.* You say, *One of my Silenc'd Brethren* (Dr. Collins you mean, in his Answer to Dr. Falkner's *Reas. Acc.* p. 63.) tells us, That *Forms of Prayer have let in such Ministers into the Church, &c.* Now, he hath no such words, that *Forms of Prayer have let 'em in,* for he grants the Lawfulness of *Forms of Prayer,* and for Ministers to use *Forms of their own,* and in some Cases the *Forms of others;* but this he saith, that tying such to the use of one *Form; whom God hath furnished with Abilities that they need it not, hath bindred Ministers care to study the Scripture; to improve in Spiritual Gifts; hath been an Engine of perpetual Discord, hath deprived the Church of the Gifts of Hundreds of Painsful Ministers, whilst in the mean time, many have crept into the Employment; (being by Liturgie and Homilies, now made so easy for 'em) of whom every one that hath any concern for GOD's Glory, or the Church's Reputē, hath cause to Blush and be Ashamed.* 'Tis not Forms in general, but the tying up to one.

And really, Sir, hath not this been so sad a Truth in England since your (so just) *Act of Uniformity,* that there needs no *Syllogisms* to prove it?

We may speak the Best, and Coniceal the rest, yet this will not put out the Eyes of *Englishmen:* And we should start a great many *Controversies,* if this should be one among the rest, Whether what so many Thousand see and hear, be true. 'Tis one undoubted Evidence

dence of it, that so many frequent our *Assemblies*; and though this you call *Schism*, yet I hope, you'll not call it so, for People to believe their Senses: I have read your *Ichabod* formerly, that tells you enough of this; and Bishop *Still. Iren.* p. 333, 334, 335. That the Reading Prayers, as a principal Ministerial Work, was the Practice not of pure Apostolical Times, but when the Church had Honour, Plenty and Ease, &c. And the late Excellent Archbishop *Til.* in his Sermon before the Queen, (both whose Immature Deaths, the Nonconformists do extremely deplore) speaks more plainly, without fearing to transgress your Rules of Civility and good Manners, That the Dissolute and Profligate Lives of too many of the Clergy, inflaming our Differences about lesser things, have had a great hand in pulling down Religion, and betraying the Souls of Men. Yet,

1. I'll readily grant you, that Evil speaking, Lying and Slandering, are a too Epidemical Disease, and the too common Effect of a Factious Adherence to a Party; but are not you the Person, that in your common Conversation, speak too Contemptibly of the Nonconformists? And your Ink is as your Breath, mix'd with so many unseemly Reflections, Mis-representations, daring Affirmations, that had I not seen your Dr. S. whom you so much Transcribe, and Mr. Long, &c. whom you take for a Pattern, I should have a little more wonder'd at.

2. I deny that I have said any thing willingly to the Derogation of the just Praise of any of the Pious Ministers of the Church of England; with some such I am Acquainted, who diligently discharge their Ministerial Duty, in their own or others Forms: Though there are many Bishops and others, that use *Conceiv'd Prayer* in their Pulpits, as we do, against whom all your Scurrilous Animadversions are equally Revell'd, without any Regret or Reparation.

(3.) That which I have affirmed and will stand to, is this, That the Establishing *Forms* for universal Use, (particularly *our Liturgy*) and the Imposition of 'em on all *Ministers*, to be us'd in *Publick Prayer*, and none other, opens a Door for a *Lazy* (I might venture to say a *Loose*) *Ministry*, to enter in, and that in the present *Laps'd State of Discipline*, many such in the *Ministry* must be expected, yea, are. Now, this I shall endeavour to demonstrate from the Nature of the thing, from the General Experience of Mankind, with some Reflections on the Reason and Rise of such *Impositions*.

First. The Mind of Man, is naturally Sluggish, and will take its Ease, and remit the Reins if it be not urg'd by Necessity, or attracted by Complacency. The Best of Men in our present State, had need of all the Obligations that can be laid upon 'em, over and above the Obligation of Conscience, which results from the force of the Divine Precept. The concurrence of Humane Motives with Spiritual, are help little enough to awake our Intention, and excite all our Faculties in a Work of this Nature. We see this in other things, a Musician will be weary, if he hath constantly the same Instrument and Tune; Variety pleases in Diet, Novelty affects in Recreations, and Commonness Dulls. If this be the common Corruption of Nature, yet till we cease to be Mortal, 'tis Incurable; and if there be a Sinless Infirmary in it, 'tis the more Regardable, especially when GOD hath left us such a rich Variety of Expressions for Prayer, and is far from restraining our Liberty in using 'em.

Secondly. The Experience of Mankind Evinces it, that such an Imposition, tends to 'let in a *Lazy Ministry*; for may not a Child of Ten Years old, read the *Prayers and Homilies* as Distinctly and Laudably as a *Learned Divine*? 'Tis idle to Dispute against Common Experience: Let Ministers be obliged to no more than to Read, and how long will it be e'er many of 'em shall

shall be Transform'd into such as can do little more? What's more obvious, than that the preservation of any Gift or Faculty, depends upon the Exercise of it? Skill in Writing or Speaking any Language, any Arts Liberal or Mechanical, are extremely prejudic'd by a few Years Disuse. You have *Moscow*, and too many other Places, frequently given you, as deplorable Instances in the present Case. We need not go far from Home.

How many *Candidates for the Ministry* find such an Imposition to have a Mischievous Influence on 'em? When they feel no necessity of Diligence in reading the *Sacred Scriptures or good Books, or of Meditation*; but that they are capable of Preferment, whilst they can read the *Liturgy*; Won't this tempt 'em to lay the Reins on the neck of their Voluptuous Inclinations, and Scandalously waste their Time in *Drinking, Sports, Recreations, Idleness*? Yea, the *Elder* not feeling the Obligations on 'em to study or Meditate, find too much leisure for *Fairs and Markets, Taverns and Coffee-houses, Cards, &c.* And is not this the ready Road to an Idle, Profane and Despicable Ministry?

Whereas, were *Forms* only Recommended, and not Impos'd after such a manner; as the *Test* of Ministers at their Ordination, would be proportionable, so afterwards they would be obliged from Honour and Reputation, to take heed to their Ministry.

Ask now, many Parishes in *England*, whether a most Pious *Liturgy*, is a competent Supply for the want of an Able Pious Minister? Ask many Persons of Honour and Quality, whether when they have sent for Ministers in their Sickness, and finding they were not able to Pray with 'em beyond the Office for Visitation of the Sick, and the *Litany*, it hath not much lessen'd their Esteem for so severe an Imposition of Prescribed Forms? Yea, some have thought, that this Confinement to a *Liturgy*, hath not a little contributed to a Breed of *Lay-*

Preachers; whilst the People have apprehended their Gifts better than their Ministers, an easy Temptation hath serv'd 'em to Usurp their Office.

Sir, The World is not yet relapsed to the blind State 'twas in in *Luther's* time, when the *Romish Clergy* had just perswaded the People to eat *Hay*: No, but whatever Excellencies you predicate of a *Liturgy*, 'twill be hard to convince 'em that the *Gift of Reading* is more admirable in their Minister at Church, than in their Child at Home: (You are here much mistaken, in thinking that I would give an Handle to loose Persons to Worship GOD publickly no where; no, but I would have you Improve your Skill and Interest to oblige 'em to pay GOD some Publick Homage, and that by encouraging some good and useful People, call'd *In-formers*; I would convince you, that the *Reading of Liturgy and Homilies*, will not suffice in our Days, to uphold the Reputation of the *Ministry of England*.) Deploable you know were the *Ignorance, Debauchery and Laziness*, of the *Romish Priests*, till *Erasmus* his Time, and the *Reformation* a little Quicken'd 'em; and the present *Liberty* hath given such a Disturbing Jog to some that were asleep before, that I fear you won't be suddenly Reconcil'd. You might do well to Enquire, whether it might not be some such Cause that set a more *Satyrical* Edge on the Stile of this Letter, than of others; for though I find *Dr. F's Vind. of Liturgies*, p. 70, 174, &c. hath furnish'd you with Matter, yet the Sting and Venom is your own.

Hence we may infer what was the Rise and Reason of such Impositions after the purest Primitive Times; 'twas not only the *Lordliness* of the *Bishops*, but the *Laziness* of the *Priests*, who were for easing themselves of those *Pastoral Duties* as required any Intense Exercise of their Faculties: Though the diligent Preaching of some, was the Felicity of the *Fourth*, and some part of the *Fifth Centuries*, yet all was too little to stem the Torrent of

of Degeneracy, that quickly overran all, and *Liturgies and Laziness* settled together. How do the few Faithful ones complain? *Nazianz. in Orat. in Laud. Basil* says the Holy Order was in danger to be rendred most Ridiculous. *Ambrose* speaks of such, *Qui mentis Torpore hebetati Sacerdotalem defamant Dignitatem, De Sac. Dign. Cap. 50.* And, what could be expected otherwise, when *Fat B-shopricks and Benefices* began to be such a Temptation, and those commonly carried it for 'em, not, who had the Richest Souls, furnish'd with Gifts and Graces, but the fullest Purse: *ut vides, (saith Ambrose) in Ecclesiâ pessimos, quos non Merita, sed Pecuniæ ad Episcopatus Ordinem pervexerunt.* *Austin* speaks of some, who could not discern propter Ignorantiæ simplicitatem, When a Prayer was Orthodox or Heretical; Yea, some Bishops in their Councils, who could not write their Names, and therefore desired others to Subscribe for 'em, *Præsentés dixerunt se Literas Ignorare: They being present, said they knew no Letters.*

Finally, Towards the end of the Fifth Century, when (you say, p. 152) *We are compassed about with a whole Cloud of Witnesses for Liturgies:* (Though such an Imposition of 'em as we now have, was a great while afterwards.) The Emperor *Leo, Anno 460.* is extoll'd for having well provided that the Church should have Able Bishops, because he would have Hands laid on none for Ordination, but such as had learn'd their *Psalter*; and therefore, 'twas to be hop'd they could read a *Liturgy* *ἡ δὲνα ἔχειρόττοις τὸ Ψαλτήριον μὴ γινώσκοντα, Theod. Lec. Coll. Lib. 1.*

Whoever will attentively read Mr. *Clarkson's Discourse concerning Liturgies*, and Mr. *S. B's* (a worthy Conformist's) *Vindication of that Discourse against Dr. Comber*, will plainly see, that under the Inauspicious Influences of Ignorance, Laziness and looseness of Ministers, Liturgies were born and bred up to the maturity of such Impusions.

Sir, In this Appeal that I make to the Experience of Mankind, and for which I would confidently promise my self the Vote of Four to One, throughout this Kingdom, of such who do understand any thing in this Business of Prayer, I am confirm'd by your own words; and because I find 'em to the purpose, and that no Argument will please you like your own, Review p. 20 of your *Visit. Sermon*, where you truly say, That 'tis frequent Exercise that will whet Ministers Parts, and set an Edge on our Faculties: (Now, though you wou'd restrain this to a Gift in Preaching, every body else will extend and apply it to a Gift in Praying, and go on with you) St. Paul exhorts Timothy, 2 Tim. 1. 6. to stir up the Gift of GOD that was in him, signifying that 'tis Exercise that puts life and vigour into our Parts, and quickens 'em into a useful Flame: — Thus to employ, is to improve our Talent, which will daily encrease by Exercise, and like the Widow's Cruise of Oil, multiply by being used. A Lazy neglect of mens Gifts (in Prayer, say I, as well as Preaching) makes 'em do the work of the LORD negligently, and for want of due Exercise of their own Parts, they do but too much exercise the Patience of those that bear 'em: He that buried his Talent in the Earth, and he that wrapt it up in a Napkin, were both deprived of 'em, and doom'd as wicked and unprofitable Servants, &c. Now, you are very Dull, if from your own words, you can't form this Argument, viz.

That which lays aside the Exercise of Ministerial Gifts in Prayer, nourishes Laziness in Ministers, and is of very ill Tendency.

But this Practice of Composing, Imposing, Declaring, Assent, &c. Subscribing to any Invariable Form, lays aside the Exercise of Ministerial Gifts in Prayer. Ergo.

You

You say, If we know any to be Loose and Lazy, we should acquaint the Church, that they may be Reform'd, or Remov'd. Now, we do hear so often of the Church, and the whole Church, and Prayers Compos'd by the whole Church, and nothing but the Church; That I wish I could tell what it is. Is it a Parochial, Diocesan, Provincial, or National Church? The first hath no power to Reform it self. The Second, or Spiritual Court, needs great Reformation: And some Lawyers tell us, That the Bishop can't deny Institution to any that can bring a Testimonial under the hand of Three Ministers for their Life; and for their Learning, can Evidence it by doing as much as a School-Boy at Twelve Years old (*turn into Latin Ten or Twelve Lines of the Articles;*) And they say if the Bishop were never so willing to Reform a Loose Clergy, there is an Officer call'd a Lay Chancellor, that doth so Cramp his hands, that he is hardly able; or else they may live a great way off, and when we come to 'em, if they say, as the Prolocutor in the last Convocation, *Nolumus Mutari*, — *We'll have nothing Changed*, then we are where we were.

Finally, there is yet one String that you are frequently and Invidiously harping on, viz. *That the Nonconformists are creeping into Conventicles, into other mens Charges, drawing away the People from the Conformable Clergy, who neither desire, nor need any of our Assistance.* I Answer,

(1.) This shews the high thoughts you have of your selves, and of the Sufficiency you have some of you for several Parishes, where the People scarce see you once a Month. It also shews, what thoughts you have of Souls, of Sin, of Holiness and Repentance, and what your Ministerial Fidelity is; when those that Personally conferr'd with the People formerly, found it hard, you that see only their Faces in the Church, can prove all our Help is needless; your Persons need no Reformation, nor your People any Assistance.

(2.) The People have as true Right to their Souls, as you have to their Tythes, and an *Atheistical or Popish Prince, or Patron, can no more impose a Minister on 'em,* than he can chuse Wives, Diet, Physick, and force 'em to take 'em.

(3.) There was a True Church-Relation of Pastors and People, when your famous *Bartolomew Aët* parted 'em; but you have never prov'd that it did Dissolve it.

(4.) If your Parish consist of one or two Thousand Souls, and not Five Hundred can hear you; do the rest need no Assistance?

(5.) We Preach to none but such as desire it, such as need it, in Places as lawfully Allowed as your *Temples* are. We neither can nor will be Ministers to any against their Wills; If you can, and take it for your Glory, much good may it do you, I am sure little 'twill do them. I am,

S I R,

July 1. 1697.

Yours

J. M.

HERE 'tis proper to Halt a little, and Advertise the Reader of the Occasion of the following Letter that Interposes as an Answer to none; 'Twas this: When I perceiv'd that our Vicar's Design was only to Expose, by sending his Letters open about Town before they came to me, that all his Objections were not in mine, but his own Words, such as did best Subserve his purpose, That his usual Manner at the end of one Letter was to promise, what I should have the next, without taking Notice of any Intervening Answer; I did begin to despair of stopping him, till he had Travers'd the Universe,

Universe, and run all Points of the Compass, of Conformity; Yet encouraged by his pretended Zeal against Excursions, I would try to recal him to a Review of his Sermon, p. 10 and 11. and that this matter might be brought to some speedy Issue, I desired him to explain himself, and satisfy me in the following Particulars.

To Mr. H——.

S I R,

MY other Employment being of too dear a Concern, to be very patient of so tedious a Digression, I would desire you

(1.) To prove, that our Blessed Saviour prescribed his Form to be used in the same Words by his Disciples and Followers, (which you Assert plainly enough in your Sermon, and very confidently in your Letter the 6th Instant, p. 101.) This we doubt, partly because the same Words are not used in one Evangelist that are in the other, and because we never read, that our LORD or his Disciples did use these Words afterward in Prayer, though we read of their praying in several Places; And your *Low'd and Learned Grotius* tells us, *Non præcipit Christus verba recitari, sed materiam Precum hinc Promere*, on *Matth. 6. Et docet nos Compendium rerum Orandarum, neque enim eo Tempore Syllabis Adstringebantur*. I know no Nonconformist that scruples the Use of it as a Form in the same Words, as well as other words of Scripture, yet we say with him that our LORD does not command the Recital of the Words, and in the purest Age (of which we have Records that can't deceive us) his Followers were not tied to Words and Syllables.

(2.) Explain what you mean by the Extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inspiration, call'd sometimes, you say, Praying by the Spirit; You would have done well to have

have told us *where*, and the *sometimes*. I do read indeed of *Praying with the Spirit*, as our Translators are pleas'd to render it, 1 Cor. 14. 15. and *in the Spirit*, Eph. 6. 18. and *in the Holy Ghost*, Jude 20. and by the two latter Expressions, I take no *Extraordinary or Miraculous Gift* to be meant, which is ceas'd; but that which every *Christian* is obliged to, and every Faithful *Christian* hath in some measure, which I think is indisputable, if the Epistles are of a General Concern; And I take the *Miraculous Gift in Prayer* to be that, whereby the Apostles, and some others, were enabled to pray in a Language they never had learn'd (and such a *Gift of Preaching* they had too) adapted to the then Circumstances of the *Church and World*. But we do believe there is a *Gift of Prayer* that is to be attain'd by the Use of ordinary means, and yet is from GOD, who is the Fountain of every good and perfect Gift. Pray, instead of persisting in the Old Gross Calumny of our Pretending to *Immediate Inspiration in Prayer*, give me your Sentiment of this miraculous Gift, and your *Scripture-ground* for it.

(3.) Tell me why could not the *Apostles*, and *Primitive Pastors* and *Christians* pray without *Inspiration*? Had they not the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, some of the *New*, and that Special Rule of Direction, the *LORD's Prayer*, and the Ordinary Gifts of the *Spirit* for their Assistance to know both the Matter and Manner of *Prayer*; and if there were an *Ordinary Gift in Prayer*, what was it?

(4.) Shew me where those *Inspired Persons* (which every Body grants the fittest to Compose *Prayers* for future Generations,) have made, and left any such *Publick Prayers*, on the completing of the *Sacred Canon*, upon which *Extraordinary Gifts* cease, with the Reason of 'em, and any further Gift in, or of *Prayer* is now superseded, and become needless. Or tell us, who are the uninspir'd Persons that have a Publick Commission from *Christ* for,

or

or a Divine Promise to, this Work of making *Prayers*, and imposing them on all Ministers, who residing with, are presum'd best to know the Necessities of their People? Pray let us know to whom this Trust is committed: Are they *Attheistical Governors, Mahometans, Arians, Papists*, that must give the Order for these Compositions, and oblige all Ministers to use these and no other? Produce their Authority from the Scriptures: Or was it the *Secular Arm* that did enforce these?

(5.) I would fain know, whether the *Spirit of Supplication*, *Zech. 12. 10.* hath no further Interest in, and Influence on *Good Ministers and Christians Prayers*, than in exciting *Inward Desires*; (though I grant this to be very considerable.) This you intimate is the only help from the Spirit we have now. But doth not the Spirit help us to pray by illuminating our Minds to know, what we need, and should desire? Do we know, if left to the Conduct of our own Spirits, (or do those know that Compose Prayers?) what's most agreeable to the Will of GOD, and what is best for our Souls and Bodies? Must we not have some due Comprehension of the Matter of Prayer in General, and as to our particular Occasions, or we can't pray as we ought? Though the Matter be summarily Comprised in the *LORD's Prayer*, 'tis one thing to have it in our Books, another in our Mind and Heart. Don't we need in Prayer a Conviction of our Natures Depavation, our Alienation from GOD, and to have our Aims directed to his Glory? And as the Spirit gives a convinc'd Sense of the Importance of these things, so I think he may, yea, doth bring the Promise to our Remembrance, yea elevate our Natural Faculties to a more Vigorous Exercise in this Duty. Now I would know, whether Ministers that are thus enlightened, convinced, and have (as you say) *Desires excited*, have not a notable Advantage above others to express themselves? Don't Anger, Joy, and any Passion, easily

easily make and pour out Words? Can you give an Instance of Hunger, that needed a Form of Instruction to beg? Sure that Doctrine came not from *Rome*, *That out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh*. Finally will you say, That the Spirit of GOD may not, or does not frequently suggest to the Minds of Suppliants, in the Fervour of Devotion, such suitable Petitions which did not occur to 'em in previous Meditation?

(6.) Help me to understand, and reconcile you, when you say, *That the poor Publicans short Litany prevail'd more for his Justification than the tedious Harangue of the Pharisee*. You tell me over and over in your Letters, *That GOD is not prevail'd on by Words any, or many, &c. and that to think so, is to have unbecoming Notions of him, and making him such an one as our selves*: This you pretend I am guilty of. Now do you count a short Collect or Litany will more prevail with GOD for your Justification, than a long one; or are not good Affections in a longer Prayer as prevalent with GOD, as in a short Litany?

(7.) Produce the Scripture, where our Saviour blames the Pharisees for their Babbling and vain Repetitions in Prayer, as if they thought to be heard for their much speaking; or ingenuously acknowledge the mistake to be an Extemporary Effusion both from the Pulpit and Prefs. And let it be a Caution to you against your much Writing, and a convincing Reason why you should have, not only a Book to pray by, but to Preach by too. Your Mistake here is not so Venial from the Prefs, as from the Pulpit: And I am sure the Bishop did not approve of, nor command you to Print your Sermon (as you gloried in your first Letter) for the sake of this Quotation. But because I find you so frequently reflecting on the Pharisees and their Prayers, and calling the Gift of Prayer Pharisaical, you may give me in a few Words their Character; but especially tell me, whether

whether their *Prayers* were by a *stated Liturgy* or no? If they were, then they did not so much prevail for their *Justification* as the poor *Publicans* *short Petition*, which he did not repeat by *Rote*, but sensibly felt: If they were not, then I question whether any other *Liturgy* than the *Holy Scriptures* will be found in *Christ's*, or his *Apostles* *Days*.

(8.) Do you know any of the Right Reverend Bishops that do pray freely before and after Sermons, or any of the Reverend Clergy, that do so, to drop *Crude and Indigested* or *Blasphemous Speeches* in such *Praying*? Or do you think there are any such *Bold Pretenders* to *Inspired Praying* in your Church? And yet 'tis notoriously known they pray from *Present Conceptions*, according to *Occasions*, and recollecting the *Truths* they have preach'd on, as the *Nonconformists* do.

(9.) Let us see your *Evidence*, that *Extemporary Praying*, (or free conceiv'd Prayer without a *penn'd Form*) is a *late Invention*, brought into these Kingdoms by the *Subtily* of *Romish Emissaries*.

(10.) Prove that such *Praying* hath rais'd *Schisms* and *Confusions*, or doth so, where *Conformists* or *Non-conformists* use it.

Sir, You may dispatch an Answer to these in a Sheet or two; and let it be Confirm'd by unwrested *Scripture*, and substantial Argument, where the Matter requires it. Six Lines may say more, than six Leaves are written for. You shall soon know what is, or is not Satisfactory to,

S I R,

Your Affectionate Friend and Servant,

May 19. 1697.

J. M.

ANSWER

ANSWER TO LETTER XIV.

To Mr. H—

S I R,

YOURS of May 25. pretends to prove, as you preach'd, and wrote, *That our Blessed LORD prescrib'd his Form to be used in the same Words by his Disciples and Followers.* This uses to be the first Stone you lay in the Superstructure of your whole Fabrick of Conformity; but you lay more stress upon it than ever 'twill be able to bear: But let's see how you prove what you so positively Assert: You'll do it four ways, as Dr. F. hath done before you.

(1.) From our LORD's express Command, Luke 11. 2. *when ye pray, say Our Father, &c. which is so plain a precept, — as could scarce be more clearly express'd.* Ans. But yet we doubt of it on many Accounts. (1.) Because there are so many Great Divines, some of which do think that Prayer only a Directory for the matter of our Desires; others for the true method of 'em; enough to shame your Confidence in this Point.

(2.) Do you feel your self obliged to use these Words in every Prayer you make, by Virtue of this Command, viz. every time you pray for a Blessing on, or return Thanks for your Meat? (or say Grace if you will;) No, thus you won't understand our LORD; but 'tis as if he had said, when ye pray *Solemnly, as Dr. H. Paraphrases it.* But,

(3.) How is this Paraphrase prov'd, or how can it be with any Probability reconcil'd to those many Instances of Solemn Prayer in the *New Testament*, where never a Petition of it is used in the same Words? Or what Warrant is there for such a Limitation of the Command

Command to *Solemn Prayer* ?) By which, I suppose you mean *Publick Prayer*.) How does it appear our LORD does not as much mean *Family* or *Secret Prayer* ? (As *Austin* thinks; of which afterward.) But if it were as you say, when you concluded your *Visitation Sermon* with the *Collect for the day*, was that a *Solemn Prayer* or no ? If it were, did you not violate Christ's Command by your Omission; and to use your own words, *When will you be so humble, as to make Christ's words an invulnerable part of your Devotion* ?

(4.) You wave the Argument offer'd against our LORD's intending this *Form* to be used Syllabically, by not seeming to understand me: I said, How are we to use the same words, when the same words are not us'd in one *Evangelist* that are in the other? 'Twas not, *εὐχαριστῶντες, after this manner*, nor *ἀλλήλως, say*, that I meant; but 'twas the Variation of the words in the *Fourth and Fifth Petitions*, and which is more material, the *Doxology* left out in *Luke* 11. where you count there's the most express Order about the Use of it. Now, which words in *Matthew* or *Luke*, are to be used without Alteration? If you say, both are to be used as the *Church orders*. *Ans.* Why don't you use 'em without any change of Christ's words? Why do you say *Trespases*, instead of *Debts* or *Sins*; and that *Trespas* against us, instead of *Debtors* and *those that are Indebted to us*? Surely *ὀφειλήματα*, *Debts*, and *παραπτώματα*, *Trespases*, are not the same words, though I should grant you, they import the same thing; but what Authority have you to alter Christ's words? However, this you'll take care of, that your *Subscription* be to your *Form*, and no other, and your *Declaration of Assent and Consent*, — be in these words, and no other. The Imagination you mention of some Learned Men, That the Disciples did not take it as a *Form*, on the first Proposal, does well satisfy me they did not so in the Second.

(5.) Sup-

(5.) Suppose this Prayer were a prescrib'd Form, many Learned Men Query, whether it were to last beyond our LORD's *Resurrection* and the *Effusion* of the *Holy Ghost*; thinking it was chiefly suited to his Disciples State, whilst under his Personal Ministry, when yet there was not so clear a Revelation of the Principal Mysteries of the Gospel, that depended on his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension: And they say, if he had intended it for a Perpetual Form, we can't imagin he would have left out his own Name; and therefore long after he had Directed 'em thus to Pray, he tells his Disciples, *That hitherto, they had asked nothing in his Name*, Joh. 16. 24. and commands 'em expressly to do it, with a promise of Audience: And so the Expressions proper for Prayer and Praises, recorded in Scriptures afterward, are by or through Christ, or in his Name; and so have the Prayers been still preferr'd or compos'd in after Ages. However, this Opinion be, I do not see any Argument in your Letter so plausible for the constant use of the very words, as this is to prove it but Temporary.

(6.) How will it follow from our LORD's obliging us to use a Form of his Prescription, that we must use one of yours? Yea, he never said, *Use this in Publick Prayer, and no other*, as you do, though his was more perfect than yours. So that should it be granted, that our Lord intended it to be used in the same words, 'twill do you very little Service.

What you say farther on this First Proof, is only, that *the Form of Blessing*, given to Aaron and his Sons, Num. 6. 23. *was Invariable*. *Ans.* 1. I despair of seeing any more prov'd, than an Obligation to the Sense, not to the Numerical words. (2.) Nor does it appear that they related to the Publick Worship, celebrated on the Weekly Sabbath; or if both these could be prov'd, yet (3.) Only this can be fairly deduced, *viz.* Where GOD hath appointed us a Form to use without Alteration

teration, we ought to Obey. Obtain but this of our Governors for us, and see whether we will not Conform.

Your Second Proof hath yet less strength, drawn from the Occasion, *viz.* *John Baptist's teaching his Disciples to Pray.* But.

(1.) Was it not necessary, that *John's Disciples* shou'd be directed how to suit their Requests to such a juncture, as the manifestation of the Messiah, and to the Dispensation they were under? Yet,

(2.) How is it prov'd, that *John Baptist* tyed up his Disciples to Words and Syllables, when they were grown up to maturity of Understanding, and had Gifts of their own to Pray by; or that our LORD did do more than suggest to his, the matter and method of Prayer?

(3.) Your Third is of the same weight, *from the Frame and Composure of the LORD's Prayer, which, you say, is not laying down the General Matter, and leaving the Disciples to word it.*

Ans. But is this Conclusive? Don't we many times give our Children Forms, which we would have 'em use as Directions, to speak to the same or like Purpose; or if as Forms, yet only till they can Pray without 'em?

But our LORD having so admirably order'd and worded your *Petitions for you* in this Comprehensive Form, why have you so many other Forms, wherein you ask for the same things in other words? And why may we use no other than yours, when our Prayers do no more differ from the words of your *Liturgy*, than your *Liturgy* does from the *LORD's Prayer*? And if you are not bound always to use our *LORD's very words in Prayer*, I would gladly know how we come to be bound always to use the words of other Men, which hath been the perpetual Controversy?

(4.) As your Proof from *Scripture*, so your Authorities from *Antiquity* are very little to the purpose, to prove that our LORD prescribed to his Followers the very words to be constantly used by 'em, (much less your *Impositions*:) Yet let me give you a few Remarks on 'em.

You begin with the scoffing Pagan, Lucian, who makes mention of a Prayer used by Christians, beginning with, *Our Father*: But why do you stifle, καὶ τὸν πολυώνυμον ᾧ δὲν ἐς τέλος ἐπιθῆναι, and ending with the Hymn of many Names, which might have convinc'd you that this is a very lame Proof, that it was the LORD's Prayer; much more Infirm for an Impos'd Liturgy; and yet most unaccountable, how this *feering Heasben* should come to be so intimately acquainted with the solemn Devotions of the Christian Churches, which they did with great Care Conceal?

Your Second is Tertullian, at the end of the second Century, whose *nova Forma Orationis*, which he saith, Christ hath appointed, many Learned Men think will conclude no more, than a new Instruction, or Direction, how to perform the Duty of Prayer. You force this Father to say, that the Christians never omitted the Use of it.

Ans. 'Tis true, not the use of Christ's Directions to suit their Prayers to his; and as for the LORD's Prayer, I can willingly grant you, that they frequently us'd it, (as we do;) that high Encomiums are given it, to which we heartily-Subscribe; but 'tis gratis Dictum, that he saith 'twas never omitted. In that Excellent Prayer of Polycarp at the stake, the LORD's Prayer is neither at the beginning nor end, Euseb. Clemens Alex. concludes his last Book of Pedagogy with a Prayer, that neither begins nor ends with the LORD's Prayer. Origen Prescribes a method of Prayer, and speaks not a word of the LORD's Prayer, but advises to begin and end with ascribing Praise, *De Orat. Sec. 22, p. 134, 135*. So that though they us'd the LORD's Prayer frequently,

quently, yet they look'd on't principally as given by *Christ* for a Pattern of all other Prayers, according to which they were to be made, and so do we. Hence *Cyprian* calls it *Orandi Legem, the Law, or Rule of Prayer*. What you quote of this *Father*, will not assure us that he laid any stress on our using the very words, but that the surest way of Acceptance with *GOD*, is to Govern our selves in the performance of this Duty of Prayer, by his Son's Directions: And that which puts this out of doubt with me, is the neighbourhood of these words following to those you mention, *Utilius Orare quam decuit non Ignorantia sola fit, sed & Culpa*, *Cypr. Serm. de Orat. Dom.* Now, let those that know any thing of *Cyprian*, judge, whether he thought it a sin to use any other words in Prayer, than those that are express'd in the *LORD's Prayer*; this would fall as heavy on those that use *Common*, as on those that use *Conceiv'd Prayer*.

And *Augustine* in understanding the *LORD's Prayer*, as a Direction for secret and mental Prayer, plainly enough intimates, that *Christ* did not teach his Disciples what words they should use in Prayer, but what things they should Pray for; *Non enim Verba, sed res ipsas eos verbis docuit*; and in quo nil aliud videtur fecisse, quam docuisse quomodo in Orando loqui oporteret. Finally, I have not yet seen the Evidence confuted, that the Ancient use of the *LORD's Prayer* was quite otherwise than of Late; it was not used more than once at one Assembly, (now 'tis four or five times) not in Prayers before, or after Sermon, yea, no where in the ordinary Service, but in the conclusion of the Prayer for the Blessing of the Elements in the *LORD's-Supper*.

Thus we come to the *Reformation*, since which, 'tis true, many recommended it as fit to be us'd in Publick Prayer, but do they declare that our *LORD* prescrib'd it to be constantly used in the same words, No-

hinc præscribere Pilus Dei quibus verbis utendum sit, ut ab ea quam Dicitur ait Formula desistere non liceat, Calvin. Mat. 6. 9. So Musculus. Grotius, as before, assures us, That the Christians were not then tied to Words and Syllables in Prayer. Non his necessario verbis, sed hæc aut Simili Sententia, saith Maldon. on Mat. 6. 9. Famous Mede conceives, that the Disciples understood not, that our LORD in Mat. 6. intended it as a Form, but only an Example; and surely they could less understand (whatever you say) by that in Luke 11. that our Saviour intended they should use the same Words as a set Form, since the same Words are not there used.

The Assembly recommend it (as the Wallacrian Classis) to be used, and tell us 'twas chiefly design'd as a perfect Pattern, but may be conveniently used as a Form; but never tell us that our LORD prescrib'd it to be used constantly in the same words.

I told you one Reason of my Dissatisfaction in this point is, That we never read that our LORD or his Disciples did use these Words afterwards in Prayer, though we read of their Praying in several places; to which you Answer two or three ways. As,

(1.) That all is not recorded in Scripture that they did; we never read the Apostles used that Form prescrib'd by Christ in Baptism, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Reply. I think the contrary, and that 'tis plainly prov'd from Acts 19. 5. they were baptized in the name of the LORD Jesus, that is, by the Authority and according to the Institution of our LORD, viz. in the name of the Father, Son, and H. Ghost. Thus Grotius, and I think the Generality of your Divines.

(2.) You Answer by cautioning me against the wild Principle of believing nothing, but what is expressly recorded in Holy Scripture, for fear of turning Anabaptist. Reply. Had I no stronger Arguments from the Old and New Testament for the Baptism of some Infants, than you have for

for your *Impositions*, and *Confining to the Liturgy*, and to the very Words of the LORD's Prayer in all ours, the Temptation to turn *Anabaptist* would not be very contemptible.

(3.) You Answer, *Learned Men have observ'd many Hints and Intimations of the LORD's Prayer in Scripture, and abundant Testimony from Tradition.* Reply. I would leave it to all Rational Men to judge, whether if our LORD had intended it should be constantly used in all our Prayers, such *Learned Men* as Dr. Casaubon, &c. would have been put to such Difficulty to pick it out, and patch it up, out of all the *Apostolical Writings*, one Sentence here, and another there; is it likely we should have no After-Record of the use of it? As for *Ancient Testimony*, we have seen before how highly and justly they commended it, how many times they us'd it, how sometimes they omitted it, and how they thought they were not obliged always to use it in the same Syllables.

This Subject would not need so many Words, but that we have to do with Men who plead an Absolute Prescription in the Case, that from hence they may urge the Necessity and Obligation of an Invariable Form, and may hence be furnish'd with a *Topick* to declaim against the Pride and Presumption of such, who can't (if it were, as it is not, granted) see what would be gain'd by it, especially since Extraordinary Inspiration is ceas'd, about which you'll next satisfy

Your Friend and Servant,

July 5. 1697.

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER XV.

To Mr. H——.

S I R,

IN yours of May 28. you give a fuller Account of that you call the *Extraordinary Gift of Praying by Inspiration*. And,

(1st.) What you say of *John Baptist's* predicting that the *Messiah* should *Baptize his Disciples with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire*, is true: So

(2dly.) Is what you observe, That our *LORD* for the Encouragement of his *Apostles* bid 'em not take thought before-hand what they should speak, nor premeditate; for the *Spirit of GOD* should speak in and through 'em: Though this be true, yet 'tis foreign to the present purpose; for it concerns *Christ's Disciples Confession* before Men, not their *Supplications to GOD*. But what you say in the

(3d) Place, is much to the purpose, viz. That our *LORD* before his *Ascension* promised to send his *Disciples* the *Holy Ghost* to be their *Paraclete*, which Word signifies not only *Comforter* to support 'em in his *Absence*, but an *Advocate* to plead their Cause by teaching 'em to pray, and forming their *Petitions* for 'em. And you might add, to be with 'em, and dwell in 'em, and assist 'em, as with *Extraordinary* then, so with *Ordinary Gifts and Special Graces* now, particularly as to this *Holy Duty of Prayer*. In *Rom. 8. 26.* the word *ὑπομνηστικὸς* maketh *Intercession*, signifies to Act for one as an *Advocate* for his *Client*, dictating what we shall move for, and how. That this means not an *Extraordinary Gift* is none of my private Opinion, but that it concerns a *Common Priviledge* of the Faithful, *Veluti Verba & Susspiria*

Suspiria nobis intus Dictat; The Spirit doth as it were inwardly dictate to us Words and Sighs, says Beza. He prompteth as it were our Lesson to us, say the English Annotations. *Est Advocatorum*, &c. saith Grotius; And this is ascribed to the Spirit of GOD; *Quia Preces ad Deum nobis dictat*. You proceed

(4.) With the History of praying by Inspiration: On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended, the Gracious Promise was performed, the Apostles were furnished with great Variety of Spiritual Gifts, of Healing, Speaking with Tongues, &c. which were all for the Confirmation of Christians, and Propagation of the Gospel: Among these, you say, there was a Miraculous Gift of Prayer, by which the Publick Offices of the Church were perform'd in those Days, the Holy Ghost inspiring both the Matter and Words of Prayer without any help or recourse to their own Invention. And to this you refer the Praying in and by the Spirit, that we read of in the Scripture. This is the Sum of your Extraordinary Gift of Prayer. But really, Sir, there are such Difficulties that do obviate you in this Matter, that are not like to be surmounted.

That there was a Gift of Prayer in those Times we acknowledge; that it was Extraordinary, as distinguish'd from the Gift of Tongues, can't be granted, till you prove it: For the Gift of Prayer is not reckon'd among those that were Miraculous, where we have a particular Enumeration of 'em. Mark last, 1 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10.

And the Scriptures where mention is made of Praying in and with the Spirit, countenance no such thing: The first is, 1 Cor. 14. 14. which at the first Glance appears not to be distinguish'd from the Gift of Tongues. As for the second, Jude 20. there we find that all the Believing Hebrews to whom the Apostle writ, Verse 1. are required to exercise this Gift, *μεσσωματις εν πνευματι αγιω*, to pray in the Holy Ghost.

So all the Converted Gentiles at *Ephesus* to whom *Paul* wrote, are exhorted to Exercise this Gift, and to pray, *ἐν πνεύματι*, in the Spirit, *Eph. 6. 18.* Now if this miraculous Gift was bestow'd on one of the Multitude, which *Chrysostom* four hundred Years after *Christ* speaks of, then that which all did partake of, was no Extraordinary Gift, *χάρισμα*, or Grace; and how could it be their Duty to Exercise it if they had it not? And if they had it, or might have it, (as it is plain they might, if the Epistles concern all Christians) then it was an Ordinary Gift, and continues in the Church in all Ages.

You conclude your History of Inspired Prayer, thus; The Effects of this Extraordinary Gift being Attain'd, by the Spreading and Success of the Gospel, when the Spirit of GOD had Dictated and Finish'd the Sacred Scriptures, in which are contained sufficient Rules for the matter and manner of our Prayers, then began this Extraordinary Gift by Degrees to Cease; and the Duty of Prayer is left to the Ordinary Way and Means, in which it continues to this Day, viz. to Forms; Forms compos'd by the Church for Publick Worship; And Forms of our own and others Composure for Private Devotion, without any further need of the help of Inspiration.

Ans. Because the Merits of this your rather Roman-tick, than Real History, will be best Examined in the next Letter, where all Publick Prayer is lodg'd in *Liturgies*, therefore thither I shall refer it: Only

(1.) 'Tis a vain thing to go about to prove the Ceasing of an Extraordinary Gift of Prayer, (distinct from that of Tongues) which never yet was prov'd to have a beginning; of which before.

(2.) What Shadow of Proof is there, that all the Ordinary Pastors and Teachers, to whom the Care of the Church was Intrusted, had any such miraculous Inspiration as is under Debate? These Gifts 'tis Evident, did not belong to all, or to any at all times, and

and therefore could not suffice for the Ordinary Publick Worship: So that till it can be prov'd there was any stated Form in the Apostles Days, we must conclude they were left to the free Exercise of their own Abilities in Prayer and Preaching, and other Publick Ministrations.

(3.) We do read that *Extraordinary Gifts* did begin betimes to be abused, and had need of the Apostles Canon for their Regulation, which he gives 'em, 1 Cor. 14. 40. *Let all things be done decently*; but we have never a word of a Liturgy, notwithstanding the many Advantages pretended by your *Ordinary Way*, as *preventing Errors, Schisms, Divisions, and Disputes*. All that the *Inspired Persons* thought necessary, was to give General Rules to pray, and with all prayer, and for all Men, according to their various Occasions: They might, if they had thought meet, have left a *Divinely Inspired Form* for all Countries, which would have admitted no Contest, nor needed any Correction; as now the Composures of *Fallible Interested Men* do.

You tell me that I have heard *Extempore Effusions*, call'd *praying by the Spirit*, and that there are *Sectaries* that have imagined the *Suggestions* of their own Fancies in Prayer, as much the Dictates of the Holy Ghost, as *Apostolical Inspiration*.

Ans. Yes, Sir, I have read and heard of strange Fancies about these Matters, as,

(1.) Of *Common Prayers* made use of as so many Charms and Spells. Dr. Comber tells us of *Greg. Nazian's good Old Father*, that when in great Pain, and under great Weakness, the bare saying of the *Liturgy* cured him. (2.) I hear of those that vouch *Liturgies* to be the Dictates of *Immediate Inspiration*; yea, in running 'em up to the Head, you'll tell us in your next, that they derive either from *St. Peter, Bishop of Rome*, or from *St. James of Jerusalem*, or from *St. Mark of Alexandria*, all *Inspired Persons*. (3.) What Influence it may have

have had upon some well-meaning *Ministers*, I can't divine, when these words, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, are used, when they receive *their Orders*; nor what Fancy honest People may have, when they pray for the *Inspiration of GOD's Spirit* several times in the *Liturgy*; If they are amiss, you would do well, Sir, to undeceive 'em, and rectify any mistake they may be liable to in this Matter.

But I ask'd you, Why the Apostles and Primitive Pastors and Christians could not pray without *Inspiration*, when they had the *Old Testament*, and some of the *New*, and the *LORD's Prayer*, for their Direction, and the Ordinary Gifts of the Spirit for their Assistance? To this you Answer, *The Reason is plain, because our Saviour made use of the most Ignorant and Illiterate Persons for his Disciples and Apostles; not the Scribes and Pharisees, and Learned Rabbies, who were well vers'd in the Law, but a Company of Fishermen and Mechanicks, that knew little or nothing of the Law.* But I Reply, (1.) You should have better consider'd, and not have contradicted your *Dr. Falk. Vind. p. 32.* It can't be conceiv'd that this great Apostle, and other Christians at that time should be Ignorant of the Common Matters of Christian Prayer. (2.) I ask'd you, Why could not the Primitive Pastors pray? Those Elders that were first tried, and then Ordain'd in every Church, multitudes of the Priests that were obedient to the Faith, Acts 6. 7. had they no Ordinary Gifts to Exercise, or were they Priests and could not Pray? (3.) How do you prove that the Twelve Apostles were the most Ignorant and Illiterate Persons? What though they were not vers'd in the Law, nor in the Learning that was then the Mode, they were Inquisitive after the *Messiah*, &c. And let me tell you, though I know you'll ridicule it, that there are Multitudes in *England* that will out-live you, Plain Mechanicks, Catechis'd humble Christians, Exemplary for Practical Piety, that have kept in their own Post with-

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out Aspiring; but for a Faculty in Prayer few Ministers can parallel them: How many on their Solemn Days have thus shar'd the Work of Prayer? the first began with Confession, the *Second* proceeded with P^etion for themselves, the *Third* with Intercession for others, the *Fourth* Thanksgiving, each keeping within his proper Province, continuing for about an hour each with very pertinent, Matter, Method, and Expression, without Tautology or Disorder, to the raising not only the Affections, but the Admiration of those who have joined with 'em; and yet these never pretended to Inspiration. And Mr. Baxter tells you in his Life, and often else where, what wonderful Effects he hath seen and felt, on the united Prayers of several of such Mechanicks in Kederminster, without either Liturgy or Extraordinary Inspiration: And there are abundance such, still surviving in this Land, after all the Methods these thirty or forty Years, by Jears, Jails, and Fines, to discourage and ruin 'em. 'Tis true, these are not of the number of the Scribes and Pharisees, or Learned Rabbies, who stifle their Gifts for want of Exercise, who though they may better understand the Rules and Theory, yet are exceed'd by many ignorant Men who do practise more; see Bishop W.'s Gift. Pr. p. 26. I could wish there were none of that young Preacher's profane Spirit, who venturing into the Pulpit to try his Faculty, and coming down tells his Companion, *I could make a shift to Preach as well as any of them, but a Devil on't, I can't pray.*

(4.) But how did they pray before the Effusion of the Ghost? To this you say,

(1.) They had the LORD's Prayer, which they used, and kept to till further Inspiration: Reply. A likely Business! that the Apostles and Seventy, when they were sent by our LORD to Preach and Teach, used nothing but our LORD's Prayer; or that the hundred and twenty, Acts 1. 14. that continued with one Accord

Accord in Prayer and Supplication, kept to the LORD's Prayer till he sent them the Spirit. But you say, (2.) There was the Jewish Service, which consisted of many Forms of Prayer, &c.

Reply 1. There's no Evidence in Scripture that the *Jews* used a stinted Liturgy, but both the Private and Publick Prayers were Free, and according to the Occasion. What Form had *Abraham's Steward*, *Gen. 24. 12, 13.* or *Jacob* for Deliverance from his Brother, *Gen. 32*? What a Loss would they have been at, if they must have had recourse to a Prayer-Book to suit these Occasions? So for *Publick* also, What Book had *Solomon* in the long Prayer he made at the *Temples Dedication*, *1 Kings 8*? And was not *Jehoshaphat's* a Free Prayer on the Fears of that invading Army? *2 Chron. 20. 5.* So *Hezekiah's* on the Receipt of *Rabshakab's* railing Letter, *Isaiah 36. 15, 16.* In all these Instances and many more, they had no Book to prompt 'em; nothing but the serious Sense of their Necessities, suggested Arguments and Expressions, and out of the Abundance of their Hearts did their Mouths speak in Prayer.

Besides, what concerns this *Jewish Service*, either all is on the uncertain Credit of the Fabulous *Rabbies*, or else 'twas the *Pharisees* long Prayer, which our *LORD* rebukes 'em for, as you say; or if it should be as some pretend, that *Dr. Lightfoot* hath retriev'd for us this old *Jewish Service*, that our *LORD* and his *Apostles* resorted to, would it not justly juggle out our present Liturgy?

Finally, I ask'd you whether there was any Ordinary Gift of Prayer then? And what was it? You Answer, That you see no great need of it, but if there were any such Gift, you suppose 'twas that of Composing Pious Forms for Common Use; for *St. Paul* orders *Timothy*, *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3.* that Prayers — be made for all Men. — But for the Ordinary Gift of Praying from present Conceptions, there

there is not, say you, the least footsteps of it in Scripture, nor in any History of the Primitive Times. To all which I Reply, (1.) Though you can see no great need of an Ordinary Gift of Prayer, others can see and complain of the want of it in you now, when yet they can't see that all the Publick Offices were perform'd by immediate Inspiration then.

(2.) Your Exposition of 1 Tim. 2. 1. is a meer Fancy, and only shews to what an Exigent the Cause of stinted Imposed Forms is reduced to; especially when such Learned Men, as Dr. F. and H. can find no better Warrant or Support for 'em in the New Testament. For, (1.) why don't we read of Timothy's Liturgy for all Men in Scripture or History? Since, if this were Paul's meaning, we can't suspect Timothy's Obedience. (2.) If Timothy had Compos'd Pious Forms, how will it be prov'd that they were Impos'd on all Ministers that could pray without them? Or had not the Pastors Gifts as well as the Evangelists? Eph. 4. 8, 11.

(3.) What's the difference 'twixt those Expressions in Timothy, *πιστεύουσας ἄσπευτες*, and Acts 12. 5. *οὐ διαλείπων* 3 *ἐν ἐκτασει προσεύχων*, Prayer was made without Ceasing? Can any Body in his Wits think either that the Prayer there was by a Book, or that the Church was earnest and constant in Composing Forms of Prayer? What is there more in *πιστεύουσας* than *προσεύχων* to necessitate such an Exposition?

(4.) Would it not be absurd to translate the Word in this manner in other places, as 1 John 3. 9. *πιστὶν ἀμαρτίαν*, to Compose a Form of Sin, so *πιστὶν δικαιοσύνην* to Compose a Form of Righteousnes? Here's little shew yet of Divine Authority for Compositions, and Impositions: You conclude, neither is there any for the Ordinary Gift. Reply (1.) I have shewn the Scripture Instances of Free Prayer, are most Numerous. (2.) We can't possibly comply with the Will of GOD, and General Rules

Rules of Scripture to pray in every thing, and with all Prayer, if it be not according to various Emergencies, and so Free.

Whether the *History of the purest Primitive Times* will speak for us or you, will appear in Examining your next Letter. In the mean time, I am,

S I R,

July 6.
1697.

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER XVI.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

Your's of June 5. pretends to satisfy my 4th, which you might have attempted without losing your self in the Wood of Antiquity.

I only desir'd you to shew me, where *Inspired Persons* have left any such Publick Prayers, or *Christ* given any Commission to *Uninspired ones* to Compose, and impose such to be used, and no other. But since, it seems, you can find none in *Purest Antiquity*, where we have infallible Records, you are confident of 'em in the first Ages; and through them I'll follow you, only Premising this:

That the word *Λειτουργία*, *Liturgy*, was used in a quite different Sense in the purest primitive Ages than now: It signified then the Exercise or Ministration of Worship, as Singing, Preaching, Prayer; whether it were a Form or no Form, Written or not Written, Premeditated or

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Extemporale: All the publick Holy Ministration was of old call'd the Churches *Liturgy*; and so, many are for a *Liturgy*, that are not for a Prayer-Book. Some Papists, when they have met with this Word in the *Ancients*, conclude they have found their *Mass*; others when they find it, fancy they have discovered a *Book of Common-Prayer*; but they are both mistaken: *Antiqua est quodcunque Pietatis Officium, etiamsi à privato præstetur.* If. Casaub. exerc. in Bar. 16. p. 383. and this, saith he, *Nemo versatus in Græcorum Patrum lectione Ignorat*, p. 384. Having premised this, let's see what ground you have for your Confidence of the *Ancient and Constant use of a stinted Form from the Days of the Apostles to the present Time.* Here first you tell me, *this matter of Fact must come to us by Tradition* (a good old Roman Evidence) *and by the Testimonies of Able and Competent Witnesses, viz.* That are infamous for Corrupting all they meddle with, Correcting, Interpolating some, Burning others of the Ancient Writings, that would detect and shame their Innovations. You well add, [*If I will take their Words*].

Ans. Really, Sir, just as much as I do Dr. Heilin's, and many of yours in this, and other of your Letters.

But what have they *Conveyed down to us*? Why, about the latter end of the *Apostles Days*, when the *Christian Church* began to be settled, (I presume upon St. Peter as its Rock and Foundation) then St. Peter, *who was the first Bishop of Rome*, (when there are a great many that deny he was ever there, though 'tis true, St. Paul was, and seems to have a better Right to the *Bishoprick of Rome* than Peter ; well ! but what did St. Peter Bishop of Rome ? Why, he) *Composed a Liturgy for the use of those whom he had Converted to the Faith.*

Ans. This is excellently *Instructive and Confirming!* In this *Liturgy* there are Prayers, *That we may be Defended by the Intercession of St. Peter, and Paul, &c.* Here's mention of *Cornelius, Cyprian, and others that lived*

lived hundreds of Years after Peter: Here's a Prayer for Consecration, which is the same Verbatim with that called the Canon of the Roman Mass. All this is an admirable Proof of St. Peter's Liturgy; but it would have been a Disparagement to Mother Church, not to have had one that might pretend to be Apostolical, as well as her Daughters.

You go on, St. James, Bishop of Jerusalem, did the like for those committed to his Charge.

Ans. Ay! And a special Liturgy tis, stuff'd with many Superstitions and Novelties, that never came into the mind of this, or any other Apostle. Here are strictures of Blasphemy as well as Idolatry, as Offering Incense to GOD for Remission of Sins, Praying to the Virgin Mary, and many other things; so that Bellarmine himself (whose Interest and desperate Cause needed such a support, yet) durst not say 'twas the Apostles; De Jacobi Liturgiâ sic sentio, eam aut non esse ejus, aut multa à posterioribus eidem adduntur, or that there were many Additions to it.

You proceed and tell us, That the same was done by St. Mark, for his Charge at Alexandria.

Ans. Yes, This Liturgy was made by one, who tells us that the King where he lived was an Orthodox Christian; he Prays for the Pope, (who Commenc'd several Hundred Years after) for Subdeacons, Singers, &c. and hath this notable part of a Litany, That GOD would Protect his City of Alexandria for the sake of his Martyr St. Mark. — All which are notable Badges of Apostolical Antiquity. Now say you, These Liturgies are all extant at this Day; and though they have undergone some Alterations in so long a Tract of Time, yet they are by Learned Men thought to be the Genuine Works of these Apostles.

Ans. (1.) If those Liturgies were the Apostles, can we think never a one of the Ancient Fathers would have intimated it? Does not Dr. Falk. lib. Ecc. 105. tell you the uncertainty of this Tradition, this being

mentioned by no Ancient Writer of the first Centuries: And your *Mede* calls those *Liturgies*, *ῥῆξιμος ψαδδῶν* the Hypocrisy of Liars, through which the Doctrine of Demons was promoted; he also calls 'em Counterfeit Writings and Authorities.

(2.) If these *Liturgies* are genuine for the most part, are they not for the most part Inspired, and so of equal Authority with the *Scriptures*? If the Apostles composed 'em for Daily use, either the Christians used 'em or no: If they did, Should we never hear of it in the Three first Centuries? If they us'd them not, Must not this reflect on 'em as impious, living in open contempt of the Apostles Authority from Generation to Generation? But indeed they are a meer Imposture, and those that are tender of the Honour of the Apostles, and of the Divine Infallible Spirit, who Inspired 'em, will be afraid how they reproach 'em, by fathering such deformed Brats upon 'em; which were indeed the Genuine Issue of the Scurf, Luxury, and Laziness of far later Decrepid Ages.

Your next Testimony from Antiquity is *Dionysius the Areopagite*, Eccl. Hist. p. 77. Contemporary with the Apostles, who testifies that there were then Forms of Prayer, to which all the People said, Amen.

Ans. (1.) So there are Forms used by the Non-conformists, both for Instruction and Devotion, to which the People say, Amen: But what's this to the Imposing an invariable Form on all Ministers? So that this Authority is frivolous. But

(2.) 'Tis Forged also; there was no such Book Written by *Dionysius the Areopagite*, who was Contemporary with the Apostles; the Author indeed affects to seem to have lived in the Apostles Days; but I need only remit you to *Dw'Pin* for Reasons to prove (who 'ere he was) that he wrote in the 5th, 6th, or 7th Century, when the Worship of God was fearfully Corrupted, and quite doo the Temper of the Ministers.

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Hitherto

Hitherto we have had nothing but Forgeries to support the Cause of *Imposed Liturgies*; let's see what follows: In the next Age to the Apostles we have the Pagan Pliny's Letter to the Emperor Trajan, That the Christians had set Forms of Hymns and Praises. But here's not a word of their Prayers, much less that they Prayed constantly by a Form imposed on 'em: So Non-conformists have Forms of Praise, not a stinted form of Prayer.

Your next Testimonies are Ignatius and Justin Martyr, who speak of *ἐκτὸς νομῆς*, and *σινος νομῆς*, i. e. *Common-Prayer*.

Ans. Ay! That's an Infallible Proof, 'tis the Word must do the work; but here's nothing that may incline us to think that any prescribed Form is meant. And in Justin Martyr the very next words do shew why they are termed *Common*, viz. because they were not limited to themselves, but extended to the whole Community of Mankind.

You proceed to the 2d (where, I think, you should have placed Justin Martyr) and 3d Centuries. Origen against Celsus, speaks of the Christians using *Προκατασχεταῖς ἐυχαῖς*, the Appointed, or Commanded Prayers. Now the whole Sentence is, whoever live according to the Gospel, using frequently such Prayers as are Appointed or Commanded, cannot be overcome either by Magicians, or Devils. Now which can we think Origen meant, Prayers Appointed by Men, or GOD? Would he have Christians to use Prayers as Spells? Or how came the use of a Liturgy to be better security against Magicians and Devils, than another way of Praying?

When Origen saith, *Frequenter in Oratione Dicimus, Da nobis partem cum Prophetis*; this, you say, is citing a piece of Liturgy.

Ans. How weakly is this Inference grounded! alas! no more can be concluded hence but what is common with those who pray *Extempore*, that they often in Prayer prefer one or two Petitions in the same words. Such

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Instances only shew what a good will you have to catch at any thing, to maintain a Desperate Cause.

As for Cyprian's Testimony, from the *Minister's saying Sursum Corda, lift up your Hearts, and the Peoples declaring their Readiness* to concur with him therein, let those that can, believe to be a proof of such a *Prescribed Form*. It seems no more than what is commonly among us, *Let us lift up our hearts to the LORD*, and which even the Ministers in Scotland frequently use.

You quote nothing out of *Tertullian* to our present purpose of Prayer; So that here we have seen your Proof of a stinted *Form*, *Impos'd* on all Ministers for the first three Hundred Years, which were the Purest Times of Christianity. And, I think 'tis very easy to shew, that there were worse things than *Liturgies*, that crept into the Church in after-times; and more than one have told you, that they will undertake to produce more proof out of the Fathers for many Doctrins of Popery, for several of their Superstitious Practices, Rites and Ceremonies, than Dr. F. or Dr. C. have for the *Antiquity* of *Liturgies*. Indeed Dr. C. tells us, that the *Fourth Century* was early enough to justify the Use of 'em, and that for this Reason, because *this was the first Age in which the miraculous Gifts ceas'd*. Now, if the continuance of these *Gifts*, (which yet were never prov'd to be at all) did supersede the use of *Liturgies* till the *Fourth Age*, how Impertinent is all you have said for 'em before in the three purer Centuries? And if you wou'd deliberately read Mr. *Clarkson's Discourse of Liturgies, and a Conformist's solid Vindication of it, in an Answer to Dr. Comber, and Dr. Collins Reply to Dr. Falkner's Vindication*, you would neither so confidently triumph in 'em, nor refer me to 'em (as you do in a Letter of yours that the World hath not yet the Happiness to see.)

But as to these *Fathers*, they were in *Manuscript*, (Printing being but about Two Hundred Years old)

and in Popish hands; the Famous and Common Editions of 'em are all Popish, and they have left out and put in what they pleas'd, which tells us how little Credit is to be given to any such Writings, any farther than they are agreeable to the Holy Scripture, and bottom'd thereon.

I need mention no Testimonies for the proof of the Negative; for if there were no prescribed Forms, Ministers prayed according to their own present or prepared Conceptions, and according to various Occasions; yet let me attend you a little further.

In the *Fourth Century*, *Eusebius in the Life of Constantine* tells us, that besides the [ἱερὰ ἰδιώματα] you say *Established Prayers*; and I say, such *Prayers as were agreeable to the Divine Laws*, and were used in his *Family*, (which made the good Emperor's Palace resemble a Church.) He made *Prayers for his Soldiers*. This you say, plainly shews his *Approbation and use of Forms*. *Ans.* Admirably well Concluded! But let any body judge, whether this does not prove, that there was then no *Publick Liturgy*; for if there had, wou'd not his Chaplains have used it? Does our King make *Prayers for his Army and Navy*? Besides, *Constantine* made these for his *Soldiers*, who were *Pagans* (for the most part) far from having the *Gift of Prayer*; yet the good Prince wou'd not have 'em be without all *Worship of GOD*; and who denies but *Forms of Prayer* should be compos'd for those that can't Pray without 'em? But what's this to the imposing on 'em Invariably on all that can?

Before I proceed any further, I would interpose some things that speak the utter Improbability that there were any such *Liturgies* as are now used, and in question in these times.

(1.) We should have found somewhat of their *Reading Prayers*, but we may as soon find *Saying Masses*, as *Reading Prayers*; yea, there were some *Bishops* (as before) that could not read.

(2.) Some

(2.) Some of the *Fathers* thought, that *Christ's Example* in Praying was to be Imitated by us, *Job. 17. 1.* when *he lift up his eyes to Heaven.* *Origen* speaks of their Eyes shut in Prayer, and 'tis not very likely they could have either way a *Common-Prayer Book.*

(3.) 'Tis unaccountable, if there were such *Service-Books*, that we never read that the *Persecutors* call'd for 'em, nor the *Traditores* ever deliver'd 'em up into their hands, as the *Bible* and other *Church Utensils* were. Why should not the *Cruel Pagans* have been as zealous to destroy these *Liturgies* as the *Scriptures*? Now, the utter Silence in this matter, is a sure sign there were no such Books in Being.

But to go forward, in the *Fourth* and following *Centuries*, there you say, *We shall find our selves compass'd about with a cloud of Witnesses,* *St. Chrysostom, Ambrose, Basil, Austin—* Framers of *Liturgies*, and *Councils* that establish'd the Use of 'em.

I Answer (1.) But how is it prov'd, that the *Liturgies* that go under the Names of *Ambrose, Basil, &c.* are indeed theirs? *Has omnes falsi postulo*, saith the Learned Lord *Mornay*; and that on Reasons unanswerable, *viz.* There are Prayers in 'em for Men that liv'd Five Hundred years after these *Fathers* were Dead. There are in 'em *Rites* and *Modes* of Worship that were not known till Hundreds of Years after: There is to be found the *Paganish, Incensing* Adorning Crucifixes, Praying to the *Virgin Mary* and *Saints*; and what an Excellent *Protestant Proof* are these for *Liturgies*?

(2.) If any think these *Forms* were the Composure of these *Fathers*, how does it appear they were intend'd beyond their own Personal Use? Or what's this to an *Imposition* on all Ministers?

(3.) If one Council, *viz.* of *Mela*, seem to speak in your *Pbrase*, *viz.* *This Form and no other*; Let it be considered, 'twas in one *Province* only; 'twas on a Singular

gular Occasion, viz. The prevalency of the *Pelagian Doctrin*, which denied *Original Sin*, and *Special assisting Grace*, &c. Many Ministers were then Ignorant, Careless, and Tainted, and the Canon extended to all their Ministerial Services, *lest perhaps something should be composed contrary to the Faith*: And the Non-conformists never doubted the Expediency of a good *Form*, where such a Distress is unavoidable.

(4.) Let who will read and consider the true State of the latter part of the *Fourth*, the *Fifth* and following Centuries, (they will find, though there were several Excellent Men, yet) the *Degeneracy* of the Church was Doleful. Even *Austin* complain'd, that for one Institution of GOD's, there were Ten of Man's; and their Presumptuous Devices more rigorously press'd than the Divine Prescriptions. The Prelacy declined to Tyranny, and affected *Secular Grandeur and Domination*: They were eager after the Power, Profit and Dignity of Places; but as for the Care of Souls, that was shifted as a thing Intolerable. *Prosper* saith, *Pastores dici volumus, nec tamen esse contendimus. We wou'd be called Pastors, but we strive not to be such.* Stinted Forms of Prayer took not place, till the Life and power of Religion dwindled into an heartless Formality, till Christianity was sinking into that which at this day is the very *Sediment of Popery*. 'Twas not, saith Mr. *Clarkson*, till the Church was in such a State as was rather to be Pised, than Imitated. When those that were Imperious, wou'd shew their Authority, and those that were Lazy, desired Indulgence, and when the Places and Names, rather than the real Accomplishments of Ministers, were Aspired after.

I have now done with your *Antiquity*, (not questioning the following Blessed Times of about One Thousand Years, when all things were in what you call Peace and Order, i. e. *Profound Ignorance and Superstition*, with an *Invariable Liturgy* or *Mass-Book*, when
all

all things, yea Persons, were in the power of the Church;) and come to the *Reformation*.

This began in *Luther and Zuinglius*, as Heads of the *Protestants* in *Germany and Switzerland*; there was a necessity of proceeding gradually in it: *Rome* was not rais'd, nor could it be Ruin'd in a day: *Luther* Corrected the *Old Mass-Book*, and made a New, leaving much in't to offend his Brethren; (though he was a Great Man, and had a Spirit fitted for the Juncture) yet I don't find his Composition was impos'd upon his Followers: And who reads *Sculteti Annales*, will find at *Zurich, Strasburgh, &c.* only a *General Directory*, no Prescription of, or Confinement to *Words and Syllables in Prayer*. *Calvin's* Composure of a *Form for Geneva*, speaks only his Approbation *pro tempore*, and comporting with the present Necessity, the People being just awaken'd out of *Popery*. In the *French Church* no rying up Ministers, only proposing and commending some *Forms*. *Scotland's* is only a *Directory*: So in the *Dutch Churches*, no Confinement, but a Liberty in all parts of their Worship, to use their own Prayers: *Minister Preces, vel disstante Spiritu, vel certa sibi proposita Formula; Concipiet*, *Har. Syn. Belg. c. 11. Can. 21.* As for *England*, this following is a true state of our Case, (as *Dr. C.* in his *Answer to Dr. F.* more largely) we had an Ignorant People, and Bigotted Clergy; not an *English Bible*, till about the middle of *Hen. VIII.* who Hang'd Papists one part of the day, and Burnt Protestants the other; and what *Reformation* cou'd proceed under such a Prince?

King Edward VI. was an Excellent Prince, and (whatever your *Heilm* thought) his Life wou'd have been a great Comfort, and his Death was a great Infelicity to the *Church of England*. He threw out the gross Superstitious Trash of the *Mass*, by a double model of the *Book of Common-Prayer*, and had a Glorious design to do more; but an Immature Death prevented

him, (as it did our late Gracious Queen *Mary*.) *Calvin's* Advice to the *Protector* in his days, was suited to the then Necessity, when *Papery* was but turning out of a Nation that had but few Bibles in the known Tongue, and very few *Protestants* that could read 'em; those that are against such an Universal *Imposition* of Forms now, wou'd have been as much for 'em then. Yea, if *Spain* or *Portugal* should be so happy as to receive the *Reformed Religion*, an *Imposition* might be very necessary now.

On King *Edward's* Expiration, Queen *Mary* Ascends the Throne, and contrary to her Promise, Burns some, Banishes others, and does much to destroy the whole Work of *Reformation*. The *Exiles* at *Frankford* varied from their *Form*, and were quiet till Dr. *Cox* came among 'em with his *Common-Prayer Book*, and put all into Confusion.

In Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign that Doctor Returns, is Advanc'd, and Revises the Book, and 'tis impos'd on Ministers, who many of 'em could only read *English*, and needed it. But what Dissent from it and Contentions about it, Persecutions, Excommunications, Banishments on the account of it, for Non-subscribing to it, and not complying with the other Terms, in that Queen's and King *James's* Reigns, &c. is a Story too long, and sad for a Repetition. But Sir, as it hath been often told you, had the Bishops at the beginning Compos'd a *Liturgy*, and left a *Liberty*, as in other *Reformed Churches*, what a world of Mischief might have been prevented? 'Tis very likely that most of the Ministers then, would have more studied the Sacred *Scripture*, and their own Hearts, and have come to Pray without it: Whereas the Severity of the *Imposition* (Reinflam'd at the Restoration) hath produc'd and continued those Extreams on both sides; some Decrying all *Forms*, others Idolizing the *Liturgy*, as if no true Prayer or Worship without it. So that how useful

ful soever the Imposed *Liturgy* was at the first *Dawning of Reformation*, when so few were able to read; much less Compose a *Prayer*; yet the Confining such whom God hath furnish'd with Ability, hath torn the Church, dispers'd thousands of Ministers, opened a Door to not a few, who have been a Shame and Burden to many Congregations in *England*: And when you have worn out your Tongue and Pen in talking of all the *Fathers and the Church in all Ages*, the People will remain convinc'd of what they feel by sad Experience.

You say, the *Puritans* Conscientiously frequented the *Liturgy heretofore*. *Ans.* (1.) True of some of 'em; but yet this would not save 'em from Scorns, Mockings, Abuses for Free-Praying in their Families, from Persecutions, for going from a Reader, to a Preacher; nor from Ruin; many of 'em who would not read the Book of Sports on the *LORD's Day*, &c. I need not tell you how they are of late disoblig'd by more Intolerable *Impositions* than ever. So (2.) They would attend your Prayers still, could they not serve G O D in a way that they verily account better, more acceptable to G O D, because more agreeable to his Word. (3.) If they could use it *Conscientiously*, yet they don't think that you so Subscribe it, and *Assent and Consent to every thing in it*; and your Silencing Thousands of their Ministers, and justifying such a Fact, fully satisfies 'em, that 'tis their Duty to have as little to do with such as you as they can, who will not Reform your selves, but Malign and Persecute others.

I ask'd you, who were the Persons that had such a Commission from Christ, to Compose for all Ministers? You Answer, *It lyes undoubtedly in the Power of the Church*, (that is, I suppose you mean the Party that are Uppermost, that impose on themselves the Name of Church, and then on others what the Church pleases.) But, what's the Proof of this *Undoubtedly*? *Ans.* (1.) An Insignificant Quotation from *Beza*, *Apostolus Disposuit Pri-*
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cum Formulas in Ecclesiis, that is, (suppose it true, which we don't believe) 'twas the *Apostle*, not two or three called the *Church*. (2.) A *Ridiculous Exposition* of *Paul's Advice to Timothy to Compose Prayers for all Men*, which was before supposed here peremptorily Asserted: But what need the *Apostle* give such a Charge to *Timothy to Compose Publick Prayers*, If, as *Beza* saith, these things were settled by himself before? (3.) A *Canon of the Milevitan Council*, which concerns not our Case; of which before.

To the Question, Who have Authority to Impose such a Form on all? You Answer, the Prince. Reply, This indeed is Comfortable Doctrine whilst we have a good One who is Supreme in all Causes: But how the *Church comes to be Incorporated into the State*, is a little hard to understand: I presume the *Church* and *State* are of a distinct Species, and can Act distinctly. But what if we do find, that the *Prince* concern'd for the Common Good tenders to the *Church* a good Project for *Union and Reformation*, and she cries out we'll have nothing altered, &c? But, Sir, howe're this be, as we owe, so we pay a great Deference to our *Governors*, and are very thankful to them for our present Enlargement, and Rescue from such malevolent Eyes, and unjust Hands as yours: Yet we count it not incompatible with Modesty and Humility, to think that we are fitter Judges of our Peoples Necessities, than distant Persons that never saw or knew them. No Humility teaches me, where my Conscience, and my own, and others Salvation are concern'd, to put out my own Eyes to see with your Spectacles. If you were a *Little Prelate*, and your Eyes much clearer than they are, yet mine are mine own; and the *Romanists* blind, Obedience is indeed none.

But the Truth of the Matter, you say, is, the People know our Necessities, and we find 'em more forward to
Relieve

Relieve 'em, than we are, to let 'em know or redress theirs.

Ans. This is one of your envious Reflections, that shews the true Completion of your Spirit, and is the Strain of all your Letters. But (Sir) as it commends the Mercy of our GOD, who hath provided for us, whilst your Malignity was in its *Ascendent*, and you had so many Penal Laws in force to Starve us; so it, besides your Intention, commends the Charity of our People, (which will stand on Record to the Honour of the *Dissenters of England* to future Ages, as our Silencing will to your Shame) when your legal Dues are recovered frequently of your own Folks with so much Difficulty, yea Scandalous Contention. There are Covetous Pluralists, that can scarce give a Penny to a poor Footpost for carrying up and down almost a *Legion* of Letters; yea, a Parish of Souls can scarce get once in a Month a Crumb for their Spiritual Refection; that do yet envy the Bread of a Neighbour *Non-conformist*. But I hope (Sir) by this time most *Englishmen* don't think, that meer *Assenting and Consenting*, *Reading a Liturgy*, or *Homilies*, *Subscribing*, *Conforming*, — are things in themselves so extremely meritorious of Dignities, Tyths, and Charity together; or makes you abler or better than your poor Brethren, whose Throats and Consciences are not so wide as yours.

I would indeed know, who must give Order for such Composures, whether Atheists, Mahometans, Arians, Papists, and oblige all Ministers to use 'em, and no other: You Answer, *Into what Hands soever GOD Almighty is pleas'd to lodge the Supreme Power, we are to obey their Lawful Commands, and be thankful if they don't exceed the Bounds of their Commission.* I Reply, But where shall be lodg'd the Decisive Judgment in this Matter? Why don't you produce so large a Commission to take away our Liberty in Prayer? You won't say the *Heathen Governors* had any such; and you have had Experience how liable to Corruption a *Liturgy* is, when

when a *Protestant Church* hath had a *Popish Head* in all *Causes Ecclesiastical*.

As to what you unworthily insinuate of *our Ingratitude to our Prince* in asking you such a Question; I would have you know, that we take it for the greatest Glory of *England* ever since the *Reformation*, that it hath such a *Protestant King*; such an one as would have clos'd those Breaches that you are widening; that would have had that Book Corrected, which you dread as much as you do an House of Correction: And who we hope is come to the *Throne* for some such Glorious End, as the Cure of our Divisions, and the Reformation of our Manners. But when we have had less Encouragement we have told you, that *Christian Rulers* are the *Churches Nursing Fathers*; that they have more Obligations to build it up, but no more Power to pull it down; that 'twas never referr'd to them, whether Souls should be sav'd or damned; whether there shall be a Ministry that can Preach or Pray, or only Read what they appoint 'em. The rest of your new Addition needs no new Animadversion by

(S I R,)

July 6.
1697.

Your Faithful Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER

ANSWER TO LETTER XVII.

To Mr. H—

S I R,

IF I may Judge of the rest of yours, *June 10th*, by the *Preface* and the *Postscript*; 'tis one entire Lump of Mistakes, Falsities, and Uncharitable Reflections. You begin with what is not true, *viz. That the next thing I desir'd was the Character of the Pharisee*, (when you leap'd over two or three that interven'd;) and you conclude also in the same manner, *viz. That the next thing is the Proof that Extempore Prayer was brought in by Romish Emissaries*: (But this *Postscript* you have left out in your Print, as you have made Corrections in Multitudes of other Places that I have not taken the least notice of.) Now any Body may see, had you not had a strong innate Inclination to draw this *Character of the Pharisee*, so slender an Invitation as mine would never have drawn you to it; However, let me take some Cognizance of it, when I have premised a few things.

(1.) I take it for granted, (with our late Reverend Mr. Baxter) That all profess Christians in *England* are either *Saints or Hypocrites*; and those, whether *Conformists or Nonconformists*, whose Lives are most contrary to their Profess'd Religion, are the most notorious *Hypocrites*. I believe you won't deny a proud, domineering, covetous, drunken, malicious, persecuting *Clergyman*, or *Private Christian*, to be an *Hypocrite*. So that the Question is, Who do most visibly and generally contradict their Profession, those of your Communion or of ours?

(2.) 'Tis

(2.) 'Tis evident by Experience since the *New Church* of *England* commenc'd (*viz.* of *Bishop Laud's Faction*, to advance Tyranny, and introduce *Popery* by Ignorance, Formality and Debauchery) That the Sots, and Swaggerers, and Swearers, &c. in Town and Country took this for their Common Theme, to call Serious Circumspect Christians, *Puritans*, *Precisians*; and since *Fanaticks*, *Presbyterians*, *Pharisees*, and *Hypocrites*, that would not be, and do as they.

But, (3.) All wise Men do vehemently suspect that Cause, which must be upheld by Accusations of *Heart Sins* that lie out of Humane Cognizance; by calling those they hate, *Pharisees*, *Hypocrites*; against which there's no Fence, but Denial, and putting you on the Proof by *Overt Acts* against the *Individuals*.

And (4.) for the Detection of the *Hypocrisy* of these, we would Rejoyce, if it would please our Rulers to make Laws that *Rebels*, *Drunkards*, *Gamesters*, *Fornicators*, *Idle Soul-murdering Non-Residents*, &c. shall be cast out, and silenced; whether they Conform or no. Get you Laws against all sorts of Vices, and execute 'em as severely as you will; and let not *Non-conformity to your Oaths*, *Subscriptions*, *Declarations* be the *Test* to try *Hypocrites* by, and let it fall where it will.

(5.) In supplying the Defects in your Character of the *Pharisee*, I shall not make a Particular Application to you, (as you do to us most unbecomingly;) I shall leave that to your self to do. But I desire you would never forget, that I make a Distinction 'twixt you; and many worthy *Ministers of the Church of England*, who are Passive in Conformity, who account the *Terms* rather tolerable than eligible, that Deplore the laying aside of their Brethren, no Triumph in it as the justest Act that ever was done, as you do: Now (Sir) these we do much Honour, and long for a just Comprehension and Coalition; we account them, though

though the fewest, yet the best Sons of the Church, that had rather unite with *Dissenting Protestants* than *French Papists*. After these Preliminaries I shall tread in your Steps, and only make some *Additions* to Complement the *Character* of the *Pharisee*.

First, *For their Name*, which whether it be from *פָּרַשׁ* that signifies to *Separate*, or that signifies *Expandere, Explicare*, from their enlarging their *Phylacteries*, or from their Ambitious Affectation of Mens Praises, and exposing their good Works to publick View; or from *פָּרַשׁ* that signifies *Exponere, Explanare*, because they were the most Profound *Expositors of the Law*, you have no great Reason to be Confident. Let it be as you say; how weak is it, to say no other, from the *Etymology* of the Word, to call us *Pharisees*? When 'tis so easy for every Party that gets uppermost to set what *Nick-names* they please on others. So the *Papists* call you *Pharisees, Schismatics, &c.* but what doth this speak, or prove, only the want of *Charity*, one discriminating *Character* of *Christ's Disciples*? But you insist on't that we are real *Separatists*, and so true *Pharisees*. Really, (Sir) if there are such as will Decree that those that shall Confess *Christ*, or not Conform to them in all their *Ceremonies, Traditions*, or that those that speak a word against any of 'em, shall be put out of the *Synagogues*, and *Excommunicated Ipso facto*, I'll not be one of those that will turn *Pagan*, and defraud GOD of all Publick Worship, for fear of an *Epithet* affix'd to my Name, *Pharisee, Separatist*, or what you please.

Secondly, That the *Pharisees* were a *Seet*, is true, and the most prevalent: They were the *Rulers of the Church*, the Chief Members of the *Sanhedrim*, *Mattb. 23. 2.* but so are not we; see *Acts 5. 34. John 7. 32.* They did pretend to greater *Strictness* than others, and all must be stretched to their Size: They Separated from all others, appropriating the Title of *Church* to themselves, and
none

none must Separate from them; They must be distinguished from others in their Garments, and such too, as shall signify a Special Purity, *Matth. 23. 5.* I don't find that the *Nonconformists* do so. They were a Proud and Domineering *Seet*, ever gaping for Preferment, aspiring after the highest Places and Titles, to be called *Rabbi*, to Lord it o're the Consciences of their Brethren, to have Dominion over their Faith, *Matth. 23. 6, 7, 8.* I should be very sorry *Nonconformists* should do so. But you ask, *Don't you look on your selves as the only Saints, and withdraw from others because they are Sinners, and delight to Whisper about, and aggravate the Failings of others?* *Ans.* Sir, we deplore the Paucity of true *Saints* among our selves and you; we do not withdraw from meer *Sinners*, but either from infectious scandalous Ones, or because we can't have Intimacy and Fellowship with 'em without Sin, or for our greater good, *1 Cor. 5. 11. Eph. 5. 11.* And we declaim as loudly against the Sin of *Backbiting* as you; and I would thank you for leave to Preach in your Pulpit against that Sin; and you may call this the Guise of the *Pharisee*, if you will.

Thirdly, The Office of the Pharisees was to be Publick Teachers and Expounders to the People; (but how then, as you said just now, did they strike off from the Religious Society of their Brethren?) and so are not we. Our Mouths, you say, are justly stopp'd, and we must not open 'em: So the Pharisees you know, endeavour'd to Silence even our Blessed LORD himself, and his Apostles: They shut up the Kingdom of GOD, Matth. 23. 13. depriving many poor Souls of the necessary means of Salvation: They would not take pains to enter in themselves, nor suffer others: They forbid the Apostles to Preach, adding Threats to their Prohibitions, Acts 4. 18. so that they were very busy in their Office.

But

But you say, These Publick Officers *did reach with much Falshood and Insincerity*, so that our Saviour was forced to Expound the Law over again to rescue it from their false Glosses, and corrupt Interpretations. You don't tell us in what manner they Gloss, and how they did make void the Law by their Interpretations; but instead of this, you make your Application, and talk of Sermons formerly preach'd upon *Curse ye Meroz*, and upon rooting out of the Kings of the Amorites, (which were Subjects as much preach'd on by those who afterwards Conform'd, as by those that did not;) and against One of the best Princes that ever sat on a Throne: You may as well, and as wisely, tell us of all the good Glosses and right Interpretations of *Holy Scripture* to establish the Doctrine of *Non-Resistance and Passive Obedience*, till you Abdicated the very Son of his Father. But since you don't mention any of the Pharisees Glosses, let me mind you of some of 'em that made void GOD's Law: How strict soever they would seem in other things, yet they were loose Expositors of GOD's Law: They did not make it extend to those Internals, and that strictness that was indeed the proper Sense, but made it reach only those outward Evils, which they and their fellow Hypocrites could well spare. Forbearance of grosser Sins, and performance of outward Rites they contented themselves with. Their Traditions and Ceremonies they impos'd as Laws on Christ's Dissenting Disciples, and were endlessly accusing and complaining of those that would not observe 'em: In these Ceremonies they plac'd their Religion; and so made void the Commandments of GOD; Matth. 15. 6, 7, 8. But so do not we.

Fourthly; *The Doctrine of the Pharisees. As they placed Holiness in some things that GOD never required, and fix'd a Brand of Sinsfulness on others that were no where forbidden,—not to eat with unwash'd Hands; &c. Now;*

this is; you say, the very Hue and Completion of our Religion;

gion, ——— using *Extempore Prayer* no where commanded, and *Religiously abstaining from Kneeling at the Sacrament, and other Innocent Rites, &c.*

Ans. (1.) The Commands, *Ephes. 6. 18. 1 Tim. 2. 1. Phil. 4. 6.* do evidently oblige us to pray according to the vast variety of emergent Occasions: The general Rules of Scripture can't be duly observ'd by such as pray no otherwise than by one prescribed Form, as before.

(2.) As for those *Rites and Ceremonies*, which you call *Innocent and Indifferent*, we abstain from 'em on the same Reason, that our LORD and his Apostles did from the *Pharisees Ceremony of washing Hands before Meat, viz.* Because the Imposers plac'd Religion in their Traditions, and had no Divine Warrant for 'em. There is no Preaching, which is a positive Duty, without your *Surplice*: There's no Receiving the Sacrament, which is a plain Duty, without *Kneeling*: No publick Baptism without the Sign of the *Cross*. Now why would the *Disciples* Disobey the Commands of the *Great Council*, to whom Judgment in all matters of Religion belong'd, and be *Nonconformists*, when the Ceremony was not contrary to the Law of GOD, but a matter of as much Decency as any of our *Contested ones* are? Was it not left they should encourage *Usurpations*? And was it not the *Doctrin of the Pharisees* to preach up and press those Observations, and make them as necessary as GOD's Worship, and instead of Divine Institutions? *Matth. 15. 5, 6, 7.* Such *Ceremony-Mongers* were the *Pharisees*, that they neglected both Mercy and Faith for 'em, *Matth. 23. 23.* for these they overlook'd the meaning of the Law of Love, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, *Matth. 9. 13.* They postpon'd the Good of Souls to their *Ceremonial Trifles*; they cared not what became of Souls, rather than abate one of these *Ceremonies*; these they held fast, and

and would not part with any of 'em, till the Subversion of their Ecclesiastick State.

Fifthly, The Life and Manners of the Pharisees. They were leavened with Pride, Malice, Covetousness, Slanders, Persecution, and Hypocrisy; leavened all over.

Infamous they were for Pride; 'twas the main business of their Lives, who should be uppermost; They Insulted over the Ignorance and Folly of *Christ's* Followers, as *Accurs'd*; and as if there were none but a Company of Women, and silly People that were his Disciples; *Have any of the Rulers or Pharisees believed on him? John 7. 49.*

For *Covetousness*; They panted after the Dust of the Earth; Abating nothing, Oppressing all, under pretence of Dues; stricter for their Tythes, than for GOD's Spiritual Worship.

Infamous for Slanders and false Accusations of our LORD and his Disciples, as sowing Sedition, perverting the Nation, Disloyal to *Cæsar*; yea, they were not satisfied with our Saviour's Blood, but they must fasten upon him the Infamy of Treason too, *Luke 23. 2.*

For *Malice and Persecution*: They did, indeed, build Monuments, and pretended great Veneration for the Dead Saints, but malign'd, and mortally hated the Living, *Matth. 23. 26, 27.* Yea, the *Romans* were not so envenom'd against *Christ*, and his Disciples, as the *Pharisees* were: The *Pharisees* Informed against 'em, and Destroyed 'em, when the *Romans* sometimes Rescued 'em. How did they repine and fret at the Increase of *Christians*? And when they had exercis'd their Revenge in the most malignant manner, they pretended Law for all their Cruelties.

Finally, They were *Infamous* for *Hypocrisy*. Their Religion lay all in the outside; all their Duties were turn'd into a Form; and how severely inquisitive were they after all that were not Conformable? 'Twas all external Devotion, without true Holiness; so that our

L O R D bid his Disciples to let 'em alone, and tells 'em, That they were a *Plant that his Heavenly Father had not planted*, and that they would be pluck'd up in a short time.

There is one thing in the *Pharisees* I had forgot to mention before, that was worse than all the rest, and prodigiously Accented their Guilt, and that was, That they Entitled the *Devil* to the Operations of the Blessed Spirit of G O D; and what was done by the Assistance of the one, they ascrib'd to the Influence of the other. This should be again consider'd by those that say, *Extempore*, or *Free Prayer*, came not only from the *Pope*, but the *Devil*.

The last and main thing is the *Prayers of the Pharisees*; and of these you say, *That as in Water, Face answers to Face, so ours do to theirs*. Now the *Pharisees Prayers* were remarkable for Two things, their *Length* and their *Loudness*; this you have in your Visitation-Sermon also, (for you have a mighty spleen at the *Pharisee*) and for which, you say, our L O R D Condemns their *Hypocrisy*.

I Answer (1.) Where do you prove their *Loudness* in *Prayer*, or our L O R D's *Condemning 'em for it*? Though if you could find it, there are those that will sooner find, that the *Rubrick* obliges you to *Read the Sentences*, and what follows, *with a Loud Voice*; and the *Priests and People must Rebearse the L O R D's Prayer with a Loud Voice*; yet I'll not say that this is the Picture of the *Pharisees*.

(2.) Where do you find that our L O R D Condemns the *Pharisees for the Length of their Prayers*? 'Tis true he does the making 'em for a *pretence* to serve any sinful selfish Design. Else we find many a *Long Prayer* Commended, not Condemned, as *Jacob's*, 32. *Gen.* *David's*, 2 *Sam.* 7. *Solomon's*, 1 *Kings* 8. *Nehemiah's* chap. 9. *Dan.* 9. and our L O R D's, *John.* 17. Yea, Was not our L O R D long in *Prayer*, *when he continued all Night*

at

at it? And the Primitive Christians sometimes spent many Hours together in Prayer, and some of their Fasts Celebrated for the most part with Prayers, that were prolonged from the Morning of one Day to the beginning of another. And how Ridiculous is it for you to talk of the great Successes of Short Prayer, as in the Leper, Matth. 8. 2. and in the publican, Luke 18. 13? What you mean by sending me to v. 28. none can understand.

The Truth in this matter is, Length or Brevity don't enter the *Essence of Prayer*: A short Prayer through Dislike and Weariness of GOD's Service, and a long one stretch'd out in Pride and Ostentation, are equally Abomination. The shortest Prayer is too long that's nothing but an empty sound, and the longest is short where the Heart keeps pace with the Tongue, and the Devotion is commensurate to the supplication. We do get us heat by Exercise, (saith a Conformist) and find the Fire more inflamed by Blowing. One would think you did *Libel the Liturgy* in the Encomiums you give short Prayer, where both the Services are near an Hour long; and you have not the fewer Words because you so often begin and end, and begin again. How ridiculous is it, to tell us, as p. 168. *That few words are enough to the Wise, and fewer to him who is Wisdom it self?* When we don't use either few or many to Inform him, but to Edify our selves. How childish, to tell us, *That a few Words are a better sign of Modesty and Reverence to Superiors, and consequently, &c.* When though GOD is Great, yet he despiseth not any, *Job 36. 5.* and though he be the greatest King, yet he takes not so much State as the meanest. For what King keeps a Court so open as to admit all Comers? But GOD invites and welcomes all his Suppliants: We are encouraged to come boldly to the Throne of Grace; we must indeed reverently remember that we are *Creatures*, but we must not forget that

we are Children. 'Tis said of *Luther*, That he was wont to Pray, *Tantâ Reverentiâ ut si DEO, tantâ Confidentiâ ut si Amico*; so Reverently as to GOD, so Confidently as to his Friend. But to return, there were Three things I desired of you under the Sixth and Seventh Head.

The (1st) and least was, What you have been all this while upon; (indeed I doubted it would be to you an acceptable Topick of Railing) though I desired only a few Words for dispatch of it: But long Reproaches, and short Prayers do best please you.

(2^{dly}) And chiefly, I would have you tell me, Whether the *Pharisees* long Prayers were by a Liturgy or no? If they were, then let em pass among the rest of their Characters, as not prevailing for their Justification; if they were not, Then where's your Jewish Service that the Apostles frequented? Don't you think the *Pharisees* had it? If not, then I believe we shall find no other Common-Prayer-Book besides the Bible: This was what I would fain have been satisfied in. Now what do you say to this? Why, truly, not a word, whatever the Mystery of it be; was it through fear of being goar'd on one of the Horns of this Dilemma, that you kept your self at such a distance from it?

(3^{dly}) I desired you to produce the Place where our Saviour (as you say) Blames the *Pharisees* for their Babling and vain Repetitions in Prayer, as if they thought to be heard for their much speaking. Now to this you Answer worse than nothing; never did a B. D. make a forrier Apology for, at best, a careless Oversight; and yet after you had Preach'd this before the Bishop, and Printed it at the Request of the Clergy, you Reprint the same Mistake without looking into your Bible, for the Satisfaction of your Eminent Dissenter. But pray (Sir) Where do we Read that our LORD Blames the *Pharisees* for their vain Repetitions? Instead of Answer-

ing, you Ask, Are not vain Repetitions the Ingredients of long Prayers?

Ans. (Sir) There are those would suddenly Reply, you should take care how you reflect on those, who in a Mornings Service do Five or Six times repeat the LORD's Prayer; Do so often cry, LORD have mercy upon us, &c. Repeat, Good LORD deliver us Seven or Eight times in the Litany; and We beseech thee to hear us Good LORD Twenty one times; which would be Vain Repetitions with a Witness, if the Dis-senters used them in their Extemporary way.

You ask farther, Do you not find one of the Pharisees going to GOD with this Proud and Impertinent Harangue?

Ans. Yes I do; but though this was in effect vain Babbling, yet 'tis far from satisfying me, or any Body else, that this is the place where our LORD Blames the Pharisees for their vain Repetitions, as if they should be heard for their much speaking; and I'll leave any to judge, whether it be not a Proud, or an Impertinent Harangue to endeavour thus to justify an Extempore Effusion; Is it not wiser and better to acknowledge the Oversight, than to double the Fault by defending it? But here I see one thing, and you may another if you will; I see 'tis with you in this as in the rest of Conformity; if you should abate but the least Ceremony, Subscription, Declaration, take the Church Keys from the Lay Chancellors, or Reform laps'd Discipline, especially on our Desires, the World will think that you are Men as others are, Fallible: And you may see how requisite 'tis that Rulers should Compose a Book of Homilies for you to Read too, to prevent such Mistakes, and to secure the Reverence of Publick Worship. However, whether you will see this, or yield that you need Repentance, this is certain, our LORD never intended those words you have in both your Sermons, of the Pharisees, but of the Heathen, Matth. 6. 7. Use not

vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.

I shall only add one thing more concerning the Pharisees Prayers, which ours, you say, do so exactly resemble, and that is this, they went to the Temple, Synagogues, or other such Publick Places to Pray; 'Twas at the House of GOD they did affect to be seen, as if the Place were an infallible sign of their Purity: But we don't read of their Family or Secret Prayers; 'twere publick Prayers only they were such Sticklers for; though our LORD does *Matth. 6.* commend secret Prayer to his Disciples, as a Mark to distinguish 'em from Hypocrites. Bishop Hall decyphers the Hypocrite Muttering over certain words in the Great Church, there Praying to that GOD whom all the Week at Home he forgets and disobeys, — Paying Reverence to the Name of Jesus, and then it may be, Swearing by the Name of GOD.

Thus (Sir) I have added some Strokes, that your Picture of the Pharisee might not go abroad Imperfect. I make not a word of Application, leaving that to your own Conscience, and others Consideration.

Finally, Because you so Extol the People's bearing their share in Prayer, as more tending to enliven Devotion, and more successful than a continued Prayer; I would know, why you tell us, *p. 27.* of your First Sermon, That the Minister is the Mouth of the People to GOD, to make known their Requests to him? or, How is this Practice agreeable to the Sacred Scriptures, where we read ordinarily of no more than *Amen* that the People spoke in *Prose Prayer*? Or, How does it suit the Reverence and Harmony of Publick Worship, for the People to Read half the Psalms and Hymns, say almost half the Prayers, and be the only Petitioners in the far greater part of the *Litany*, whilst the Minister only recites the Matter of the Prayer, and makes no Request

Request at all? If this be for Edification in your People's true Experience, you may be assured we wish you good success; but this we are sure of, 'tis against the Edification of Thousands of us; And should it be Impos'd on all?

You say, *Experience shews us, that Breaks and Interruptions call upon the Mind afresh, and renew its vigor and intention.* We can oppose our Experience to yours, which irresistibly convinces us, That a Continued Prayer doth more to help most of the People, and carry on their Desires, than turning almost every Petition into a distinct Prayer, and making Prefaces and Conclusions to be near half the Prayers. Were several of our short Prayers well digested into one, (saith Vox Populi) we humbly conceive, it would be like the uniting of the little Sparks of Heaven into a Constellation, that renders 'em the more Conspicuous. And if the frequent Breaks and Pauses be a main Commendation, Who can sufficiently admire the Popish Service, and all the multiplied Collects, Responds, Ave's, and Paternosters therein?

But let's a little consult Experience; don't our Eyes and Ears tell us, that in an Assembly of Three hundred Persons, suppose Sixty or Eighty have Books and can Answer, the rest either can't Read, or have no Books; now whilst the Prayers and Psalms are said by some of the People aloud, the Murmur of their Voices is so confused and unintelligible, as must hinder the Edification of the rest; on this Subject a Minister of the Church of England hath told the World, *How the Popish Friars beyond Sea, laugh at us for such an Apish Mimickry*; and he saith, *That this confused Noise in the Church is against plain Scripture, 1 Co. 14. 11, 23, 26, 31, 33. and hath a tendency to keep the People Ignorant (if they can't Read, as alas! 'tis too common a Calamity) of at least, one half of the Psalms*; and further he saith, *How came, or who taught the Women*

(194)

to prate so in the Church? I suffer no such confused Babbling in mine, and therefore several took Snuff and went away; but they left their Places to their Betters, and we want nothing so much as Room. Thus he. And 'tis (Sir) the general want in the Nonconformists Assemblies, tho your Responses and Alternate Readings are wanting; where, if the Requests put up are agreeable to GOD's Will, those that join, can readily say Amen. If not, they are no more bound to give their Assent to such Prayers, than I am to such Doctrin as you are pleas'd to bless the World with in some part of your Sermon; of which Stuff, more must be yet expected by,

(S I R)

July 8.
1698.

Your almost Tired, but true

Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER XVIII.

To Mr. H—.

S I R,

YOURS of June 17. brings me to the very Dregs of your Sermon, viz. To your Asserting Free-Prayer to be a late Invention brought into these Kingdoms by the Subtily of Romish Emisaries. That 'tis a late Invention, you say hath been in some measure prov'd already, because Antiquity (you should have said Scripture first) makes

makes mention only of two ways of Praying, one by immediate Inspiration, and the other by the use of Publick Forms.

Ans. This is Unparallel'd! What is there no way of Secret Ejaculatory Family Prayer made mention of in Scripture or Antiquity? but besides Inspiration, only the Use of Publick Forms? I thought indeed this sort of Scribbling would bring Religion and Devout sense of GOD, to nothing at last but an empty Form, which is the Grand Design of the Romish Emissaries all the World over.

Your Preliminaries are easily granted, viz. That Rome lost at the Reformation, great part of her Power, Patrimony and Preferments, and therefore great Art hath been used for our Reduction. *Ans.* 'Tis true, one great Pique against the Church of England by Romish Emissaries, hath been on the account of her Patrimony and Preferments; (as to other Matters there have been several that have call'd themselves her Sons, of the new Edition) that have been very Ductile to an Accommodation, but the hazard of Livings and Lands, hath made her an Invincible Bulwark against Popery.

'Tis also freely granted you, that one of Rome's principal Wiles is to create and continue Divisions among Protestants, (of which the new Uniformity seems a standing Evidence) and that they put on diverse Vizards for that end. That there's no Tool (either Form or Free Prayer) that they'll stick at, is also Indubitable, if it may promote their Ends: But that Cummins and Hatb, brought Free Prayer into these Kingdoms, or from hence is its Original, you can't expect we should take yours or Dr. N's Word; though upon the Credit of these Stories, you Write, Preach, Print, that 'tis enough to put us out of Conceit with the Gift of Prayer, and the Pre-
tenders to it.

I shall not take the pains to transcribe these Stories at large, but refer to the Account you give of 'em; And that which I would offer about 'em, I would reduce to these Four Heads.

First,

First, I doubt the Truth of these Stories, and that (1.) For several Circumstances attending 'em: *Partly*, Because 'tis a Mystery they should not come abroad till about 120 Years after the Matter of Fact: 'Tis a large Nap they have taken through so many Rousing Reigns. *Partly*, Because the Doctor who Publishes 'em, seems to have a Fire-brand at his Tail; His words to Mr. Baxter and Mr. Jenkins are, *Things can't stand long in this posture; our vain Janglings will come to the Umpirage, either of the sharpened Sword of the Law, or the terrible Law of the Sword; and Self-preservation must prevent the last, by the use of the first, and timely Severities must obviate future Miseries.* Now 'tis Remarkable, these Stories were Printed just after the Popish Plot was sham'd by Suborning a Protestant one, when a little before, the Honourable House of Commons had Voted, that the prosecution of Protestant Dissenters would have much the same Tendency, that this Dr. saith their Toleration would have: Yet at that time, he peremptorily tells us, *That the Private Conscience is bound to submit to the Publick.* He is confident, that a Toleration of Nonconformists will introduce Popery, and prove the Inevitable Decay of Christianity; 'Twill oblige, saith he, the Supream Magistrate, to act against his own and the publick Conscience of Christianity, and to Establish Iniquity by a Law, &c. When I read nothing but Fire and Sword throughout the Book, I must confess, it renders the Stories to me the more Suspected. We constantly see those that are in such an heat, neither care to speak True, nor fear to speak False.

Besides, the main Circumstances in Cummins's Story seem to be very weakly Attested, and to hang upon a very precarious Evidence. For how is it prov'd that he revild the Publick Prayers as a Translation of the Mass? This the Publisher tells of him; He did not say any such

such thing to the Queen and his Examiners; And how does it appear his Followers discover'd this? Especially that he fled to Rome, was Imprison'd by the Pope for reviling his Person, and railing at his Church; but afterward telling the Pope what Service he had done him in Preaching against Set Forms of Prayer, and for Praying Extempore, calling the English Liturgy Mass, &c. he was Commended, and had a Reward of Two Thousand Ducats? But how doth all this appear? Why all hangs upon the Credit of one John Baker, Master of a Ship, who said he had seen Cummins in the Low Countries; But 'twas an Amsterdam Merchant that told him all those things. But how that Merchant came to know 'em, or how Credible both the Master and Merchant were, no body can tell; and I am confident you had rather believe it, than seek or attempt the Proof on't. In the mean time, does not this seem to be a weak Wire whereon to hang so great a Weight? However, whether this were true or no, Baker is thank'd for his Information, and so dismiss'd. See Foxes and Fire-brands.

Secondly, I doubt the truth of these Stories from your own Unfaithfulness, or Self-inconsistence in relating 'em. Now I have two Accounts of yours by me concerning this Matter. You are cautious in your Letter to me, but it seems you have forgotten what you writ to your worthy Friend, (as you Superscribe him) and mine also Honoured Mr. H. Sept. 19. 1695. who having heard your Sermon, faithfully told you, He could not thank you for this Passage in it. There you say, *These two, C. and H. having receiv'd their Message and Instructions from the Pope, to sow the Seeds of Discord, came over, (when alas! the Generality of the Clergy of England in this 9th Year of Queen Elizabeth, were scarce Protestants, being all Educated in Popery) and betook themselves to the Great Business they were sent about.* Now, where is this Prov'd? viz. *That they came*

over, and they receiv'd Instructions. Where did Cummins receive 'em, and whence did they vent 'em? Was it not out of your Pulpits they were vented by both of 'em? Not one of 'em that we read of, Preach'd in a Conventicle. You go on; *At their return, they gave the Pope an account of their Expedition.* This is another Falsity, for *Herb* was remanded to Prison, Pillory'd, his Ears cut off, his Nose slit, his Forehead stigmatiz'd with the Letter R. Condemned to endure perpetual Imprisonment, and died suddenly a few Months after in Prison; so that he receiv'd the Reward of his Spiritual Praying, &c. but never return'd to give the Pope an Account. Yet, you say in that Letter, *That the Pope rewarded them with Two Thousand Ducats; besides other Preferments heaped upon 'em.* But where have you this too? Is it not one Untruth heap'd upon another? *Dr. Nalson* indeed hath it, that *Baker* said, *The Dutch Merchant* told him, that *Cummins* had such a Reward, but not a word of other Preferments. It behov'd you to have a better Memory. Now, do you believe your own Story? Or, can you reconcile your Letters to the Doctor's Relation, or to each other? Till you can, you must give me leave to suspend my Credit to 'em.

Thirdly, I doubt the truth of these Stories, especially *Cummins*, because the World is so full of such Shams, and when *Designing Persons* have a selfish Project to carry on.

Merthinks it looks a little odd, that we are told *Cummins's* Story produced the Penal Statute of Twelve Pence a Sunday for missing *Divine Service*, and to second the *Act of Uniformity*. And here I shall venture to give you a Parallel Story to refresh your Memory, which is better Attested than yours.

The *Act of Uniformity*, which you got in 1662, is justly esteem'd the Spring of all the Discord, Persecution, and Distraction, the Nation hath groan'd under

under for now half an Age; and no better Fruits could be expected from it, if we do consider the Scandalous Intrigues were used for the obtaining it; and that was by making a Presbyterian Plot, of which, Captain Tarranston has Printed a full Discovery, 1681. where he tells you, That if King Charles Ilds. Gracious Declaration touching Ecclesiastical Affairs, had past into an Act, it would probably have Cemented a great part of the Protestants through the Kingdom; but some of the High-flown Clergy and Laity rejected it, and instead of an Act of Union, resolv'd on an Act of Uniformity; and some of the Leading Churchmen were heard to say, They would have an Act so fram'd as should reach every Puritan; they would make 'em all Knaves, if they Conform'd; they would Insert such Conditions and Subscriptions, that they should not be comprehended by the utmost stretch of their Consciences: But because they feared the King and Parliament were not yet prepared for the Passing of such an Act, they forg'd a Presbyterian Plot, as the first Trial of their Skill: This Plot was laid in many Counties of England: That which the Captain mentions, was in part executed in Worcestershire; where a Packet of Letters were pretended to be found on Oath, before Sir J. P. which being opened, it presently Appeared there was a Contrivance to raise a Rebellion in the Kingdom. Many Ministers, (presently after Nonconformists) and Scores more were seiz'd, brought to Worcester, and Imprison'd by the Trained-Bands: One poor Man, that came to see his Minister, was by one of the Church-Guards, (that were retain'd and pay'd by the Dignified Clergy, when the Trainers were gone home) an Apparitor, first menac'd, then tied Neck and Heels, had lighted Matchas put betwixt his Fingers, that burnt 'em to the very Bone, and all to extort from him a Confession of a Presbyterian Plot. This Clergy-Band secured and detained the Prisoners, till the noise of the Plot run through the Kingdom; especially had possess'd the King and Parliament at Westminster. All was discovered by the Person that was employ'd to carry the Packet of

Sham

Sham-Letters; they were bid go home, and never question'd afterward; and indeed there was no need on't, for they had gain'd their Point. Several of the Members had with open Mouth inform'd the House of Commons, there was on foot a Dangerous Presbyterian Conspiracy, that there was an Absolute Necessity of making some severe Act against this Restless Sort of Men: Hereupon a Bill of Uniformity was Excogitated, and pass'd that Session, though some say by very few Votes. This is Matter of Fact past Contradiction; many of the Persons concern'd still alive, and among them, it may be, the poor Man, who carries about him the shrivel'd Skin caus'd by those burning Matchess. I only transcribe you a few Circumstances, by which it appears, that your famous Act of Uniformity was got by an Infamous Stratagem. This is the Foundation-stone of the Present Establishment; and 'tis a wonder it had not silenc'd all the Ministers in England, except two or three; for they were all to Assent and Consent to the Liturgy in its several Alterations; and that Book came not out of the Press till about Bartholomew-Eve, and they were to make their Declaration the next Day: So that all subscribed to they knew not what was contain'd in that Book; and so the Effects of that Edict were as Scandalous as the Cause. And I assure you (Sir) for this Reason, I'll be very cautious how I credit such Stories of Contrivances, that do produce such Penal Laws and Executions. Were the tenth part of your Reproaches of it true, Free Prayer would deserve as severe a Prohibition, as Dr. S. and you, and many others desire; and yet you never durst forbid it to this day, for no other Reason that can be imagined, but this, That 'tis Interest rules the World. But (Sir) though I have hitherto doubted, yet

Secondly, I'll grant the Monks and Jesuits have too successfully acted their Parts, and play'd their Game among

among all Parties, both the looser and stricter sort of Protestants: And you do but vainly think that *Conformity* is a sufficient Preservative from the Infection. But is it not evident, That the winning of one or two Court Cards does signify more than the small Game they play among *Dissenters*? As to Matter of Fact, have not the *Jesuits* had a Pestilential Influence at Court in the late Reigns, maugre all the Prayers of the Church could do to Antidote the Venome? Did your two late Heads of the Church escape the Contagion? Ask his Dearest Abdicated Brother, whether the Great Patron of the Church and Liturgy did not dye a Papist? Did the *Jesuits* fly-blow the two Royal Brothers with *Extemporary Effusions*? Or were not the Silencing of Ministers, driving them from Corporations, suppressing private Conceptions in Prayer, or exposing 'em, rigorously imposing Subscription to use no other than the Liturgy in Publick Prayer, Assent and Consent to all and every thing in it; Were not, I say, these judg'd the most proper Mediums to Distract and Divide the People; and do we not feel the Effects of 'em to this Day? Could our well Compos'd Liturgy fully secure the late Bishop Parker, Cartwright, &c. from a Revolt to some Points of Popery? And Goodman sat many Years in the Episcopal Chair of the Diocese of Gloucester, as zealous as any for the Liturgy, and against *Extemporary Prayer*, and yet he lived, and died a Papist. And were there not many of the Parish Priests, that were Cordial Papists in Cummins's and Hetb's Days? And whatever you talk, as if *Conceiv'd Prayer* were a *Jesuitical Invention*, we do find all the Popish World over, that their Clergy do prefer, use, and are confin'd to a Liturgy; yea, that they have corrupted, yea lost the Power of Religion by bringing all to an Image and Form of it: That the *Jesuits* ever have, and still do zealously oppose the Publick Use of Free Prayer, as you do, hath been prov'd beyond Contradiction; though they are

an Order of Men, or a Pack of Villains, that can transform themselves into a thousand Shapes, when ever they think their Interest requires it: They will watch and improve their Advantages on all sorts; and can you think a loose profane Generation can escape 'em, though they are not the fondest Persons of *Extempore Prayer*? 'Tis but a Vanity to think yours any more secure from *Impostors*, than other Assemblies. 'Tis but in the *Post-Boy* of April 6. 97. you have a Parson convicted for Clipping and Coining at Derby Assizes, who would sometimes transform himself into a Physician, sometimes went for a Captain, of late years a Clergyman, intruding himself into several Churches, forging Letters of Orders from one Pulpit into another, and what Security against such? Tho' I hope the Provision made in the Revolution to prevent *Popish Royal Matches*, will be a proper Expedient to rid our Hands of this sort of Men in future Ages. Yet after this Concession,

Thirdly, I deny that *Popish Emissaries* introduc'd *Free Prayer* into these Kingdoms; or that 'tis a late Invention, &c. Use it, or Abuse it they may here, as they do a *Liturgy every where*, for their own Ends; and what Effectual Fence is there against such Men, who will say, swear, subscribe, dissemble any thing? But would Bishop Hall have given such *Encomiums* of *Free Prayer*? (as I shall in my next convince you) Would Bishop Sands (as I have heard) long before leave his Desire for the Use of this sort of Prayer? Would so many Bishops and Divines now Pray in the Exercise of this Gift, If they had dreamt of any such *Jesuitical* or *Diabolical Original*? How saucily do you talk of many of your Superiors on this, and yet all the while commend Humility to me? The Ministers that first fix'd at Frankford under the *Marian Exile* used *Free Prayer*, not the *English*, or any other stinted Form; and this was long before Cummins and Herb. 'Tis no more likely that the *Jesuits* brought in this *Spiritual Way of Praying*,

Praying, than 'tis that the late Bishop Ken, or any of our present Bishops introduced *Extemporary Preaching*, because they Preach without Notes.

Besides, how rashly do you express it, brought into these Kingdoms, in the Plural? Was not Scotland's Reformation begun and settled without a Liturgy, and upheld by Free Praying and Preaching to this Day? And if there were need, why might we not rather say, that this way crost Tweed, and was transmitted from that Kingdom, to the most moderate Churchmen here, as well as Dissenters, rather than from Rome? But it hath been the manner among the best Conformists and Nonconformists, till the Laudonian Faction would have restrain'd it, not only in England, but in Scotland too, by sending a Liturgy thither; of which attempt good Bishop Hall saith, *What ever unhappy Divisions were in it, I wish they had been prevented by some seasonable Gout or Palsy.*

Indeed Free Praying was the way in the first and best Ages, while Ministers were not (as one expresses it) Besotted by Intemperance, nor had lost the Use of their Faculties by want of Exercise, nor were their Gifts shrivell'd up by a Curse, because they did not employ 'em.

The common Prescribed Liturgies were the Issue and Darlings of late, Dark and Degenerate Times, for which the Bishops of Rome were the greatest Zealots; and when the Ministers answer'd *Proper's* Character, (modestly including himself among 'em, that the guilt might take the less Exception) *Officii nostri vitantur Laborem, Utilitatem & Dignitatem appetimus; non Gratum Domini qui nobis pascendus commissus est, sed nostras Voluptates, Dominationem, Divitias carnaliter Cogitamus & Lac & Lanai Ovium Christi Oblationibus quotidianis ac Decimis Fidelium gaudentes Accipimus; & curam Gregum deponimus, viz. We Aspire after the Profit and Dignity, but decline the Work of our Office; we regard not the LORD's Flock committed to us to feed; but we carnally*

mind our Pleasures, Riches, and Domination; the Fleece and Milk of Christ's Sheep; the Offerings and Tythes of the Faithful we gladly receive, but we lay aside Concern for their Souls. When this was the Complexion and Genius of the Clergy, stinted *Liturgies* began to be in fashion; such a Temper pav'd the way to their Free Entertainment.

h. Fourthly, I Query, whether it be just we should be put out of Conceit with the Gift of Prayer, because Popish Emissaries have abused it, or transmitted it to us. I think you would not allow such Consequences: As for Instance, If any should go about to prove, that we are beholden to the Popish *Mass-Book* for a great part of the *Liturgy*; And that either, by King Edward the 6th's Message to the Western Rebels: See Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, Vol. 2. p. 667. Anno 1549. where are these words, *As for the Service in the English Tongue, it seems to you a new Service, and indeed is none other but the Old; the self same Words in English that were in Latin, saving a few Words taken out; and if the Service of the Church was good in Latin, it remaineth good in English, for nothing is altered, but to speak with Knowledge that which was spoken with Ignorance; An Alteration to the Better, except Knowledge be worse than Ignorance.* Or if any should further proceed, and take the Pains to compare several of the Prayers, especially the Shorter ones, with the *Romish Breviary*; the Offices of Baptism, Burial, Matrimony, Visitation of the Sick, with the *Ritual*; Administration of the LORD's Supper with the *Mass-Book*; and should thence take Liberty to Declaim against it, as having affrighted a hundred Protestants from the Church, for one Papist it hath attracted to it: Or further, should clamour and say, that the Pope himself consented to have it used, if he might but confirm it (as they say Bishop Davenant affirms.) Or finally, should argue after this Rate, That they can't yet fathom a Reason why a Form of Words fitted up for Use in Prayer (which

is a Rational Act offered to GOD) should not be liable to the same Corruption and Pollution, that a Dish of Meat fitted for Natural Use is, and that if they are told the one hath been offered in an Idolatrous Service, they ought to abstain from it, they can't see why they should not be oblig'd to refrain the other, from 1 Cor. 10.

I say, *From all such Premises would it be Equitable to infer this Conclusion, That 'tis enough to put us out of Conceit with this Book, and the half Adorers of it?*

That our Divisions are a Melancholy Prospect, that *Papists Expectations are brightened by them*, that *Romish and Jacobite Emissaries* are very busy to re-embroil us; all this I grant and lament; but 'tis not in our Power to prevent or heal. If the Agreement of *Protestants* be desirable, by whom can it be done most cheaply and easily? If your Oaths, Subscriptions, Declarations, Ceremonies were forborn, what Farthing worth of Harm would it do you? We count our selves heinous Offenders against GOD, if we should stretch our Consciences to your Conformity; and what Sincerity is it to complain of Divisions, and justify the Impositions that unavoidably necessitate 'em? to complain of the Strength of *Papists*, and continue those Engines that weaken *Protestants*?

You tell us how the *Papists tamper'd with Archbishop Laud with offers of Preferments, and finding him Inflexible, they took away his Head for refusing a Cardinals Cap.* *Ans.* 'Twere very desirable that you were as flexible to an Accommodation with your Brethren in England, as Bishop Laud and his Dependents were with the *Papists* in France, or a sort of Popery here. For this I refer you to the Lord Falkland, and Dr. Heilin; The former in his Speech to the House of Commons;

A little Search (saith he) will find 'em (viz. the Bishop and his Faction) to have been the Destruction of Unity, under pretence of Uniformity; to have brought in

Superstition and Scandal under Titles of Reverence and Devotion, to have defiled our Church, by adorning our Churches; they have evidently labour'd to bring in an English, though not a Roman Popery; and have oppos'd the Papacy beyond the Sea, that they might settle one beyond the Water.

Dr. Heilin in the Life of Bishop Laud, Applauds his Design of Reconciliation with the Papists, especially when it may be done; not only Salvâ Charitate, without breach of Charity; but Salvâ Fide too, without breach of Faith. He grants there was such an Accommodation endeavour'd twixt the Agents of England and Rome; That his Grace the Archbishop was much dispos'd thereto; That he had for several Years introduc'd some Innovations, approaching near the Rites and Forms of Rome; that there were but two Sorts of People like to hinder it, viz. the Puritans at home, and the Jesuits abroad. If you would read Mr. Baxter against a Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction, he'll tell you of a True, and a New Church of England; and that the New Sort were for a Coalition with the French or Roman Church, and that these have been the great Agents in all the Dividing, Silencing, Persecuting Laws; and when they were told in 1662, what Encouragement Profaneness and Popery would take from the Division, that would be unavoidable by the Impositions, Dr. Gunning and others told Mr. Baxter, They had a greater Party than we were, to consider, and who must not be Alienated to please us. And when Dr. Bates said, That abundance more of the Popish Ceremonies might be Introduced by the same Reasons, as were pleaded for those Impos'd. Bishop G. answer'd, They must have more and not fewer. And Bishop Morley said, That he had good Reason to believe, that most of the Roman Church on this side the Alps, viz. France, would have joined with us, were it not for the Stumbling-block that Calvin had laid in the way. Yea, Bishop Sheldon and others said, They were afraid too many would Conform, and if this much would

(167)

not turn 'em out, there should be more, for Enemies within the Church were more Dangerous than without. This may serve to let the World know how hearty these Men were in the Cure of the Divisions complain'd of.

Finally, I would have you beware how you do Reproach your Church, which hath still so many Ministers that do pray as the *Jesuits Disciples*: And especially take care how you do reflect on the Aids of the *Holy Spirit in Prayer*, in whose Name you Baptize, and are Baptized; whom, you say, You trust you are inwardly mov'd by, and are bid Receive, when you take Orders. I am,

S I R,

July 14.
1697.

Your Real Friend and Servant,

J. M.

ANSWER TO LETTER XIX.

To Mr. H—

S I R,

IN Yours of June 25. you'll Consider what *Human Authority* I alledge for free Prayer in Publick. Now 'tis a wonder after the vile Character you have given of it, as of *Romish, yea, Hellish Original, a mischievous Device, an effectual Tool to undermine the Reformation, and destroy all Religious Worship*, that there should be found any of the Clergy of *England* that should use it, much more that a Bishop, and a good one too, should be a Patron of it, and speak much in its Commendation. This you count an Aspersion that you'll Vindicate

M 4

Bishop

Bishop Hall and Bishop Wilkins from; and this Letter is drawn out in a sorry Apology for the former: But first, *You must needs say you are glad to hear that some Bishops will please us* — and that 'tis to be hop'd that in time we'll Reverence the Order, &c.

Ans. (1.) Fully to discuss this Point, whether Bishops are *Fure Divino*, an Order Distinct from, and Superior to other Ministers (tho' you must Assent and Consent to this new Doctrin) would spend so much time in Writing Letters, and so many Pence in carrying 'em, that neither you nor I should be very willing to spare; and I believe 'twould be less Injury to the Publick to forbear 'em, than 'twould be to the poor Post to carry 'em *Gratis*.

However (2.) You are in the right in this, that the way to get us reconcil'd to Bishops, is for them to be such as Bishop H. Bishop W. And indeed we are far better pleas'd with some Bishops than you think we are, as Bishop H. Usher, W. &c. and several of our present Sovereign's Promotion: We could wish there were many Hundreds more of 'em in England.

And though there are matters in Debate between us, that we are not yet like to refer to their *Final Decision*, yet I will in this Paper tell you, why we have an honourable Esteem for Bishop Hall, for his Exemplary Piety, his Painfulness in Preaching, his Temper and Moderation in other Ecclesiastical matters, as well as in this our present *Controversy*, and this in the last Periods of his Life.

First, For other matters, if his 5th Rule in his *Peace-Maker* were complied with, it would heal us, *viz. To bear with our Brethren so far as we safely may*. Now can't you abate those things without Sin, that we can't advance to without it? Can't you be content your selves with all that you contend for, but you must compel and force others to 'em, and that on such pernicious Penalties? You may see this Bishop's Moderation in his

Modest

Modest Offer, &c. Where he saith, he should flatter (those happy Times you talk of) if he should Justify or Approve all the Carriages of those entrusted with the Ecclesiastical Keys, or blanch over their Corruptions; there was ground enough for Complaint and Reformation; and he wishes That Man mayn't Prosper that desired not a Reformation. But you say, there's no need of any Complaint, or Petition for Reformation; 'tis what you dread, not desire, and yet don't doubt but you shall Prosper. He further confesses the great Abuses that had been in the managing of the Church Censures, and passing the dreadful Sentence of Excommunication for Trivial Matters. He proposes much the same Model with Bishop Usher, to reduce Episcopacy to the Primitive Pattern, to render Discipline more practicable, &c. Thus you see the Good Bishop was sensible of Abuses, and would (if he could have told which way) have mended 'em.

Secondly, Let's consider Bishop Hall's Sentiments as to Prayer; and here I'll grant, that as he us'd, so he Vindicates the Liturgy; but I never met with a word of his to justify the Imposition to use no other in Publick Prayer; and as for Assent and Consent, this is a late Invention, an Artifice of some Exasperated Clergymen for their own Ends. Now here, because you'll have People blindly to believe, and take your Word, (when, it may be, you have not seen the Bishop's Words) I'll recite some of 'em, that you may see his Sense both of Private and Ministerial Free Prayer. Of the first he thus expresses himself in his Humble Remonstrance: Far be it from me to dishearten any good Christian from the use of Conceiv'd Prayer in his private Devotion, and upon occasion also in Publick; I would hate to be guilty of pouring so much Water upon the Spirit, to which I shall gladly add Oil rather. This is not to be oppos'd in another by any Man that hath found the true Operation of Grace in himself: Thus as to private Free Prayer. Especially of Ministerial Extempore Prayer he saith, *Vind.* 407. I don't plead at all against
present

present Conceptions either in Prayer or Preaching; I gladly make use of both as effectual Furtherances of Salvation. And before, p. 215. What have I, saith he, profess'd concerning Conceiv'd Prayer, but that which I ever Allow'd, ever Practis'd, both in Private and Publick? GOD is a Free Spirit, and so should ours be, in pouring out our voluntary Devotions, upon all Occasions. So p. 409. he saith, Our Church allows equal Freedom in Praying as in Preaching; who that have sat within the Reports of our Pulpits, but can say, that our Ministers do there Pray as freely as they Preach? — And all Christian Divines have ever had this Liberty. Now what say you to all this? Why, you understand him that he made use only of the Publick Liturgy in his Publick Devotion, and of Free and Conceiv'd Prayer in Private, and this you call a pious and excellent Practice, which no Christian Church Condemns, and you heartily wish that all who profess the Name of Christ would imitate, — — — and what wise Man ever thought or said otherwise?

Ans. (1.) I thought we had had a Wise Man that had Writ otherwise, viz. That now the Extraordinary Gift is ceas'd, the Duty of Prayer is left to Godly Forms of our own or others Composing for private Devotion, p. 144. And you further say, That for this Praying by sudden or present Conceptions (which are the Bishop's Words) there's not the least footstep of it, either in the Scriptures or Primitive times, p. 148. And yet now you wish, That all who profess the Name of Christ would imitate this pious and excellent Practice.

(2.) If the use of Conceiv'd Prayer in Private be such an excellent Practice, then one would think the use of it in Publick should not be a Romish or Hellish Artifice, And I could wish you would spend your Zeal more in persuading your People constantly to keep up the Worship of GOD in their Families, though by Pious Forms, till they come up to this excellent Practice of Extempore Prayer.

(3.) Though

(3.) Though this Moderate Bishop thought the Church did allow Free Prayer, 'tis only Sufferance or Toleration: And some of his Brethren did attempt at that time the Suppression of all Free Prayer in Publick; and those Fathers of the Church did heartily desire at the Restoration, that great care might be taken, that there might be none of those *present Conceptions* either before or after Sermon. And 'tis notorious, that now in the most Ignorant Parishes, there's nothing left but Book-Prayer.

I have often told you, to what Persons, and in what Cases I think a *Liturgy* convenient, and therefore you injuriously conceit, I set up *Conceiv'd Prayer* in opposition to it; though I should be loth in such a Land to suppose such Cases, or that such Persons should be Ordain'd that can't Pray or Preach without a Book of Prayer or Homilies. As for what you Quote from Bishop Hall's *Peacemaker* against Conventicles, We are far from giving way to every Combination of Christians to raise up a New Church of their own, as Wasps meet together that are not worthy of an Hive.

I Ans. (1.) This might have been applied to Dr. Gunning, &c. Reading the *Liturgy* in Cromwell's Days.

(2.) The Bishop does not suppose that the Old Hive is too narrow or hot to hold 'em all, and therefore they are forc'd to seek a new.

(3.) He heard not of a Law made by King, Lords, Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons Assembled in Parliament, to Allow Hives to such Combinations; whereby 'tis evident they are not esteem'd pernicious, but profitable by Governors, whose Judgments are most valuable. I am,

July 19.
1697.

S I R,

Yours,

J. M.

A N.

ANSWER TO LETTER XX.

To Mr. H——.

S I R,

YOUR last, of July 1. pretends to drive us from what you term our last Refuge, viz. *The Authority of Bishop Wilkins, in his Book Intituled, A Discourse concerning the Gift of Prayer; which that you may Disparage, as also the Memory of so great a Man, you begin with the Novelty of his Undertaking, gravely Informing us, That new Devices and Inventions in Religion, have been ever found to be very Dangerous, and all Churches have felt the mischiefs of such Innovations, and 'tis more safe to keep in the beaten Road of Antiquity, than seek out and wander in the bye-paths of Novelties.*—

Ans. This is very Important Doctrin! which would have kept Christianity out of the World, and the Pope, with all his detestable Enormities, in England. This was the most Popular Argument against the Reformation at first, that it was a new Device and Invention, and is the perpetual Obstruction to any Advance or Progress in it at this day. But 'tis to no more purpose, than to talk what a dangerous thing 'twas to have a New Translation of the Bible, or than 'tis to leave the old Tract of Hopkins and Sternhold's Meter, and run our selves into the Briars, by making a New.

You say, there was no use nor need of this Artificial Gift, all Christian Churches at all times and places, performing their Publick Worship by set Prescrib'd Forms.

Ans. And is it not still a Wonder, that this Learned Man should so far forget Antiquity and himself, as to be at such pains about an Useless Needless Gift? One would think he had lost his own Memory, whilst he

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is laboriously providing Rules to help others to Pray by theirs.

But, say you, when this Art began to be Studied and put in Practice, it soon became an Instrument of Division, and is at this day, one of the principal Wiles of Seducers, and therefore this Great Man abandon'd it, without Adding, Improving, or so much as Correcting the Imperfection of it, and was himself a constant frequenter of the Publick Prayers of the Church to his dying day.

Ans. But how does it appear that he did find the bad Effects of this New Experiment in Divinity, or that he was convinc'd, 'twas an Instrument of Division? Did he ever complain of it in any Book, or to any Person? Did he ever retract it any more than he did his Ecclesiastes or Gift of Preaching? No, not any of these; yea, he never so much as Corrected the Imperfections of it. Now, what can we think of all this, but that he saw there was no need of Correcting it, and that he was well satisfied with his Performance? Would so Pious a Man and so great an Honour to the Church, have suffer'd such a Book to pass all his days without any Recantation or Reformation? A Book that contains a Project of Mischiefe, (if we'll believe your Character) that is as Pandora's Box, to let out all manner of Plagues on the Church and World; an Handle for Hereticks and Sectaries, to play their Game upon silly a People, and one of the Black Arts, and principal Wiles of the Devil and Seducers. Would not such a Book think you (if the Bishop had alter'd his Judgment, and been of yours) been call'd in, and Burnt, as those Conjuring ones were formerly, it having rais'd so many Evil Spirits, that the Publick Prayers of the Church, can't lay to this very Hour? No, Sir, this Bishop had no such frightful Thoughts of his Gift of Prayer, nor did he ever repent of what he had done. But as Instances of his Temper, (1.) He conniv'd at, and continued worthy Mr. Angier in his Church at Denton in Cheshire. (the Bishop's Diocess) exercising his Publick

Publick Ministry without a Publick Liturgy from Bartholomew, to his dying Day. (2.) He consented and concurr'd with Mr. Baxter, to draw up Proposals for a *Comprehension and Indulgence*, Ann. 1668: He offer'd many Emendations and Alterations of the Liturgy, and Mr. B. saith of him, That he was not Strait in this: (Observe, he was liberal in the Corrections of the Liturgy, though he did not think fit to Correct his own Discourse of the Gift of Prayer.) But,

You say, we must consider the time of the writing this Discourse, with the Occasion and End on't. The time was when the Liturgy was laid aside, and a Deluge of Errors let in by the help of Free-Prayer. — The End on't was to set up Mental Forms, to supply the want of Book Forms, and to preserve Sense in Ministers Prayers; that this was his Sense, appears by his Practice, when Uniformity was Restor'd, &c.

Ans. So I think we must consider the Time when the Gift of Prayer is loaded with all imaginable Infamy, as fit only to be spurn'd out of every well order'd Church. In which Time, 'tis a wonder the Bishop should not retract this Gift; But he knew that himself did, and Thousands more can, Pray as Seriously, Sensibly, and Judiciously by this Art, as any can by the Liturgy.

That the Design of this Worthy Man in his Discourse of this Gift, was, not merely to help the Memory, but to excite the Affections, furnish the Judgment, promote the Consolation and Edification of Men, and every way to improve both Ministers and Private Christians; I will not be beholden to any to believe, that read it. That this Ability, Art, or Gift, is in it self of great Consequence and general Concernment, both to Ministers and Christians, he assures us; to Ministers especially who give themselves to Prayer, Act. 6. That notwithstanding Premeditation, yet he would have none to tie themselves precisely to any particular Form of Words, (though of his own Composing, and

and fitted to his own Condition) but that they should either Add or Alter, according as any Emergent Occasion, or some new Affection suggested, shall require. We see this Bishop's Mind by his Words, but you say, *We must take it from his Practice, and from the latter and wiser part of his Life.*

Ans. But 'tis sometimes not so much the Evidence of Truth, as the Revolutions of Time, that alter Men's Practice, when yet their Sentiments are unchangable; there are the Temptations both of Prosperous and Adverse Times. There are many Conformists in England that are Passive, and cordially desire Alteration; And tho the Torrent of Imposing Conformity was so violent the other way, yet the Bishop gave abundant Evidence, that he retain'd his former Opinion, which if left free, wou'd soon have return'd into the old Channel. And so would the poor *Dragoon'd Converts* in France, whatever their present Practice is, which is no Indication of their Minds. That this Bishop was the Glory of the English Church the World knows, yet for his Moderation, could not 'scape the Lash of some Men's Tongues and Pens: So that the late *Excellent Arch-Bishop Tillotson*, who was of the same Temper, and willing to have had all these Bones of Contention Buried, before his own, was forc'd to Vindicate him in his Preface to the Bishop's Sermons, in these memorable Words, *viz.* I purposely mention his Moderation, and likewise adventure to commend him for it, tho this Vertue so much esteem'd and magnified by Wise Men in all Ages, has of late been Declaim'd against with so much Zeal and Fervency, and yet with that good Grace and Confidence, as if it were the Abridgment of all Vices: Yet, saith he, I am still of the old Opinion, that Moderation is a Vertue, and must at last be the Temper of the Clergy of our Church, if ever we seriously intend the firm Establishment of it; and do not Industiously design, by cherishing Heats and Divisions among our selves, to let in Popery at those Breaches.

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You ask me, *What I have gain'd from the Authority of this Reverend Prelate?*

Ans. Certainly this, That there is a Gift of Prayer yet remaining in the Church, and that 'tis a Shame for Ministers to want it, a sign of Prophaneness to Jeer at it, and that it should be Coveted and Labour'd for. All this stands firm and Unretracted.

You conclude your Letters as Rationally as you began 'em, That *we may Estimate Men's Opinions from the Practice of their Latter times, not Younger years.* Well then! What shall we say to the Immortal Parliament, who were all except Four or Five, for a *Liturgy in their Younger Years; but when maturity of years had Ripened their Judgments, and length of days had increas'd Knowledge, and Experience had added to it,* they Abolished both Prelacy and *Liturgy*, and brought in the Directory. So, he who was in Rawness of Youth, Arch-Bishop Williams, in maturity of years, was a Parliament Colonel. And Arch-Bishop *Usher* Declared in his latter Days for the Reformation of the *Common-Prayer Book*, and the Reduction of Episcopacy from Diocesan, to the Primitive Pattern; so Bishop *Hall*. What you your self will be, be at or be for, no body can tell, till you grow Older and Wiser. Providence is Circulating faster than your Letters. To close all, have you on an Impartial Review of your great Performance, satisfied me or any else in the most momentous Matters propos'd? Or have you not Discreetly pass'd 'em over, as not worth your Cognizance? How far you have obtain'd your Ends, let others judge. I am,

S I R,

July 20. 1697.

Your Cordial Friend,

J. M.

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An Appendix. Containing Animadversions on Mr. H's Sermon, of the Expediency of a Publick Liturgy, to preserve the Reverence of Publick Worship. Preach'd at Bridgwater, for the Satisfaction of an Eminent Dissenter.

S I R,

THEY are but a few Remarks I desigh on your *Vindication Sermon*, since a great part of it is Uncontroverted, and much hath been already Debated in the preceding Letters. You might very well take it for granted, That GOD is to be served with Reverence and Godly Fear, p. 3. And we heartily agree with you, that the serious Consideration, of the Infinite Perfections of our Maker, wou'd be a means to excite Reverence in us, and to screw up our Minds to a due Pitch (I'm sure we need not fear getting a Peg too high) of Veneration for him, p. 4, 5. But whether we may hence draw a just Encomium of the Collects of the Liturgy, is another Question. And whether each of these, as you Affirm, p. 6. begins with the Attributes of GOD that are most proper to usher in the Petition that follows, any one that considers the Collect for the Clergy — who alone workest great Marvels, send down on our Bishops and Curates — the healthfull Spirit of thy Grace, &c. may Satisfie himself. Besides, whether the Prayers left us on Sacred Record, are not usually one continued Speech, (I speak not of any transient Request or Ejaculation, which may be us'd in the midst of other Business) he that runs may read. I doubt not, but you might find near as good reason for cutting your Sermon into single Sentences, and giving each its proper Exordium and Epilogue, as for making a Prayer of almost every Petition. But after all, is it not Gross Partiality to decry the frequent Invocation of the Name of GOD (which without any ground,

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you charge on us) as a fulsom Repetition in Free-Prayer, and yet all the while Extol the same thing as a Perfection of the *Liturgy*?

You proceed, p. 6. to consider the Nature of the *Outward Reverence of the Body*, which you say, is held forth in the last words of your Text, *Psal. 89. 7. And to be had in Reverence of all that are round about him.* Now, whether the parts of the Text were design'd to enjoin the Inward and outward Reverence Distinctly, as you handle 'em, 'tis not worth while to consider: I fully agree, that God is to be Worshiped with our Bodies as well as Spirits, and that we ought ordinarily to use such outward Postures in his Presence, as best express our inward Reverence. Yet you have several things on this that I can't so easily Assent to. As (1.) Methinks 'tis express'd too Generally, p. 7. *That an Inward Reverence for GOD, will always draw after it the Reverence of the outward Man.* 'Tis plain, this holds not in Cases of Bodily Infirmary: A Sick Man may be possess'd with Inward Reverence, and yet Pray in his Bed. One that is not able to Stand or Kneel, may perform this Duty Sitting; Yea, I think in any case, where (otherwise) a fitter Posture wou'd much Discompose the Mind for the performance of the Inward part of the Duty.

(2.) You tell us, p. 8. that *what outward Gestures are most expressive of Honour and Reverence, the Practice of the Church, and the Custom of the Country where we live, will be the best Guides to direct us.* Ans. That we ought ordinarily to Worship GOD agreeably to our Custom of Expressing Honour and Reverence in other Cases, in the Places where we live, I freely grant: But that the Practice of the Church is any Prime or General Rule or Guide, I deny; For else the Fopperies of the Roman Church, might set up for Decency, and oblige all in those Territories to conform to their Model.

(3.) I think Standing might have been as well reckon'd among the *Postures of Reverence used in GOD's Wor-*
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ship under the Old and New Testament as in our days; tho
 it be omitted in your Catalogue ; See Mark 11. 25. And
 though in the Psalm you quote, 95. 67. 'tis, *Let's War-
 ship, and Fall down and Kneel* ; yet Job 30. 20. to cry to
 G O D, and stand up, are used as Synonymous Expressi-
 ons. But the conclusion of this Paragraph is Admira-
 ble, both for the truth of the Proposition, and the
 strength of its Proof. The words are, That in all our
 Saviour's Prayers to his Father, we find him upon his Knees,
 the Evangelists frequently relating that he Kneel'd down and
 Pray'd, for which Luke 24 (it should be 22.) 41. is
 quoted. Now (1.) For the Proposition, that in all
 Christ's Prayers, we find him on his Knees, 'tis such a Mi-
 stake, that any Person who hath but Curiosity to read
 over the Gospels, may easily detect ; for there some-
 times we read of his Praying, without the mention of
 what Posture he us'd, but where 'tis most improbable
 that he Kneel'd, Job. 17. So 11. 41. On the Cross it
 was impossible to Kneel, Luke 23. 34. And elsewhere
 we read expressly he did not Kneel, but fell on his
 Face and Prayed, Matt. 26. 39. But for the Proof of
 this, you say, *The Evangelists frequently relate, that he
 Kneel'd down and Prayed.* But does it follow thence,
 that in all his Prayers we find him upon his Knees, because
 the Evangelists frequently say, that he Prayed Kneeling ?
 Where's the strength of the Consequence ? Yet how
 does it appear that the Evangelists frequently relate, that
 he kneel'd down and Pray'd ? Why from Luke 22. 41 ?
 There one Evangelist once affirms this of Christ, there-
 fore the Evangelists frequently relate it of him. I can't
 find where this is said in any other Place. I reassure
 you Sir, the frequent Mistakes I meet with in your
 Printed Sermons, are to me a more convincing Proof
 of the need you have of a Book of Homilies to Preach
 by, than any Argument you here use, is of the Expediency
 of a stinced Impos'd Liturgy for all Ministers to Pray by.

Next, you condemn those that sit at their Prayers,

as say you, *the manner of some is*. For our parts, we disallow it in all, except in case of Necessity, where GOD will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice; as for others, we can't excuse 'em from Irreverence; though I see no Reason by such Expressions as yours, p. 9. (*That 'tis the rudest Affront that can be offer'd to the Majesty of Heaven, and that 'twill one day be answered with the greatest Indignation*) to seem to equal it at least with Blasphemy it self. Yea, I should fear that the Toying, Trifling, Antick Gestures, &c. in some Parish-Churches and Cathedrals, and many not saying their Prayers till they are in their Beds, will not have an easier Doom.

You come (2dly) *To consider the way and manner how this Reverence may be best express'd and secur'd in the Publick Assemblies.* To this end, say you, we must Note, that there are but two ways of Celebrating the Publick Worship and Service of GOD; and they are either, First, By a Publick Liturgy, or well-compos'd Forms of Prayer, wherein both the Matter and Words are Digested and Prepared to our hands: Or, Secondly, By Extemporary Effusions, where both these are left to the sudden Conceptions of him that Prayeth.

A few words to shew you how rawly and confusedly this is Express'd. (1.) To say, that there are but two ways of Celebrating the Publick Worship and Service of GOD, either by Forms of Prayer, or Extemporary Effusions, is most Improper and Untrue; and I might as well say, there are but two ways of Celebrating the Publick Worship and Service of GOD, either by Homilies, or Sermons of our own Composing, or either by Singing with Organs, or without 'em, &c. as you by *Praying with Forms, or without 'em*. Is Prayer the only Act of Divine Worship? Is there not Singing, Hearing, receiving the Sacraments, &c. that are celebrated in several Different manners? (But you forget your old Logick of Genus and Species, p. 34.) But because a Liturgy must be Extoll'd, whether the Text will fairly admit it or no, I shall allow you to put Prayer in the place of Worship, and then

then it stands thus, There are but two ways of Celebrating Publick Prayer, either by a Liturgy or well-composed Forms, wherein both the Matter and Words are digested and prepared to our hands, or by Extemporary Effusions, where both these are left to the sudden Conceptions of him that Prayeth. Yet still, (2.) here's a palpable Mistake; For, is there no Medium between preparing both Matter and Words, and preparing neither? Is there a necessity that both be left to the Sudden Conceptions of him that Prayeth, where both are not prepared before-hand? 'Tis the usual Practice of Nonconformists, to use Premeditation both as to the General Method and Matter of Prayer, the serious Sense whereof, together with the Habit they have acquir'd by Study, and frequent Use, supplies 'em with Words suitable to the Occasions of their several Congregations, Luke 6. 45. Yet, like one that would have People believe he better knew our Practices than our selves, you dare affirm, that the way of Extemporary Effusions, where neither Matter nor Words are Premeditated, is the way of the Dissenters: Which is false. And the other way of Praying by Forms, is the Established way of the Church of England, wherein she treads in the Steps of all Antiquity, there being no Christian Church from the days of the Apostles to the present Age, (no, not in Scotland nor New England!) but what hath perform'd their Publick Worship by a Liturgy or set Forms of Prayer. Now, as this can't be prov'd, (tho easily said) so herein you plainly contradict your self; for p. 141 of your Letters, you affirm, That the Publick Offices of the Church were in the first Ages of Christianity (and elsewhere after Dr. Comber, throughout the three First Centuries) perform'd by extraordinary Gifts, the Holy Ghost inspiring into 'em both the Matter and Words of their Prayers: And p. 100. when this Extraordinary Gift ceas'd, Then were Publick Prayers Composed. How then can it be true, that there hath not been one Christian Church from the Days of the Apostles to the present Age, but what perform'd the Publick Worship by a Liturgy?

Liberty? I have done with your *Note*, and let any Conjecture how happy you are like to be in the Progress after so many Stumbles at the Threshold.

Let's come then to the stating of the Question, which must be thus, *Whether the Way of well-composed Forms, or of Extemporary Effusions, does best tend to promote and preserve the Holy Reverence of Body and Mind before described.* This is admirably well for the Satisfaction of Dissenters, who neither own all your Forms for *well composed*, nor acknowledge their own Prayers to be *Extemporary Effusions*: Doubtless, Sir, you think the very Words *well composed Forms*, and *Extemporary Effusions* to be half a Solution.

But before you enter on the Discussion of this (mistaken) Point, you'll Premise four or five things, and they are just six in number.

The first is, To assure us of the Goodness of your Design: And indeed though the Performance be mean enough, I would not have any without good Reason call your honest meaning in Question; only some People may be apt to think you were too forward to be an Informer of others, before you had any clear Notions of the matter in hand your self.

In the second Premise, p. 11. we have this notable Assertion, That *all the Prayers we find offered up by our Saviour, consisted of Forms*; for the Evangelists tell us that he prayed three times, saying the same Words. Good Sir, think more on what you next Preach or Print, or expect rather to nauseate all, than satisfy any, even though but an Ordinary Dissenter, by such Blunders. Just now we heard it confidently asserted, That *all our Saviour's Prayers were on his Knees*, and here they all consisted of *Forms*. But what is't for Prayer to consist of *Forms*? They would indeed be Forms to us, should we hear or use 'em, and so would any *Extempore Prayer* that should be penn'd, and afterwards rehears'd. But is there any Evidence they were all *Forms* to him, or
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prepared to his hands; or can you think that of *John 17.* to be so? Don't they seem to be offered up on some particular and sudden Occasion? Sure you won't say here too, 'twas necessary they should be compos'd before-hand to secure the Reuerence of Divine Worship.

However, say you, 'tis plain, thus they all were, for the Evangelists tell us that he prayed three times, saying the same Words. This is excellent Satisfaction that all our Saviours Prayers consisted of Forms! But whoever can examine the Original, or will the Translation, will see the Weakness of this Proof. Compare the Evangelists, *Matth. 26. 39, 42, 44. and Mark 14. 36, 39. Luke 22. 42.* and you'll find our Lord did not use the same Syllabical Words. Consider the Original, *καὶ λέγων αὐτὸν*, is singular, not the same Words, but Word, and seems to be a plain Hebraism, Christ said the same Matter or Thing, or to the same Sense. But if it were the same Words, 'twill as well prove all the Dissenters Prayers to consist of Forms, since there's none of 'em but in their Prayers have used not only three, but thirty times one and the same Sentence.

As to the third Premise, I can hardly make the Parts on't agree. You say, *The Church does not Condemn all use of more Free and Conceiv'd Prayers in Private and Secret: — But the Publick Worship ought to be so fram'd and worded, that all may know what they are to join in, and say Amen to.* Well! and ought not Private or Family Worship to be so fram'd too? On this Account I see no greater Reason for a Restraint in the One, than in the Other. But even in Publick too, where the Church hath made no Provision, we are not restrain'd from a Sober Exercise of our own Abilities. How then is it necessary, That the Publick Worship be so fram'd and worded, that all may know what they are to join in, and say Amen to? Without which (as I understand you) Christians can't with one Heart, and one Mouth glorify their Creator. At your Leisure Reconcile such Contradictions.

You advance to a fourth Premise, continuing the same Self-inconsistence, exclaiming, *Can any think fit to make so bold with their Maker as to vent any thing of a sudden before him, p. 13?* Forgetting that in the foregoing Page we are allow'd Free (which with you is the same with *Extempore*) Prayer in Secret, Private, and sometimes in Publick too; yea, p. 185. you say, *'Tis a Pious and Excellent Practice.* Nor can I reconcile the Sentence that immediately follows, to Truth, viz. *That what is Irreverent when done to Creatures, must be much more so when done to GOD:* For we think it Irreverent to bespeak our Superiors in the Quakers Dialect, to sit when the Ambassadors of Princes deliver a Message to us, &c. And yet we say *thou* and *thee* to GOD in Common; and Conceiv'd Prayers; and sit at Sermons without any such Imputation.

You advance to a fifth Premise, viz. *That GOD Almighty is not to be wrought upon either by the Multitude or Variety of Words; and therefore neither of these can be any Token of Reverence and Respect to him: And here, say you, lies our main Error and Mistake in this Matter. But 'tis your Mistake, or worse, to charge this on us: We believe that no Words at all, many or few, old or new, are in any wise acceptable to GOD meerly for themselves; but only as they are Expressive of, and accompanied with the sincere Devotion of the Soul. See Answer to Letter II.*

You prove that few and well weigh'd Expressions in Prayer evermore find the best Acceptance, for GOD resists the Proud; and to be proud and to use many Words in Prayer, you suppose to be the same thing. And you conclude this Premise with a plain remarkable Instance, by which it evidently appears (which no body ever question'd) that 'tis not the Multitude nor Variety of Words, that is (in its self) pleasing to GOD. The Instance is that of the Publican, and the Pharisee, Luke 18. *The Publican's few Words were well pleasing to GOD, but the Pharisee on the other hand, comes with his long Prayers, and spins*

spins out his Petition into a Multitude and Variety of Expressions, &c. But how Irrational is it from GOD's accepting a short Prayer attended with all the due Qualifications of Suppliants, and his rejecting a long one accidentally accompanied with Pride and Arrogancy, to extol the one, or disparage the other in themselves consider'd? But besides the Impertinence of this, who does not see what a ridiculous *Extempore Effusion* is here: *The Pharisee comes with his long Prayer!* You must needs be very short at your Devotion, when you accuse a Prayer for its length that takes not up two Verses in the Bible; several of which must go to compose one Collect, which doth not take up the tenth, it may be the twentieth of an Ordinary Service. You add, *The Pharisee spins out his Petition into a Multitude and Variety of Expressions.* Alas! what Absurdities will not some Men vent to satisfy *Eminent Dissenters*? The Pharisee has not one Petition in all his Prayer, and yet he wire-draws his Petition into a *Multitude and Variety of Expressions*: Truly, Sir, should any in his Free Prayers be guilty of half the *Multitude and Variety of Mistakes* that I find in your Sermon, 'twould better satisfy me of the *Expediency of Forms*, than all your Premises and Arguments to boot.

I come next to your last Premise, (which is the sixth of your four or five) and that is, *That sudden and unpremeditated Speech is liable to many Indecencies and Imperfections, yea, such as oftner stand in need of a Pardon, than procure Acceptance.* This is more Elegancy! why, yea, *such as oftner?* I thought all Indecencies did always stand in need of a Pardon, and so to be sure, *oftner stand in need of a Pardon than procure Acceptance.* One would think that a Person that hath so often inculcated that Scripture on the Dissenters, *Let all things be done decently and in order*, should not now plead the Cause of Indecencies, and seem here to Insinuate that there are some Indecencies, that oftner procure Acceptance than stand

stand in need of a Pardon, or that stand in no need of a Pardon at all. But as to the thing it self, I leave it to the Experience of the World to judge, whether such as on some Occasions are allowed to pray freely, are not then more likely to find the Tongue an Extravagant Member, not easily confin'd within the Rules of Decency, when for the most part it hath been tied up, than such as by constant Use and Exercise have tamed it, and regulate it by Scriptural Devotion. I shall take my leave of your Premises, when I have desir'd you to tell me, what you mean by one part of your Paraphrase on Psalm 141. 3. Set a watch O LORD, before my Mouth, keep the Door of my Lips, viz. that no Evil may enter in, or come out of it. What Evil did the Psalmist there pray might not enter in to the Door of his Lips? Now I confess, 'tis with many from the much Good—that's pour'd in, that there's so much Evil pour'd out on many Occasions, and therefore there is need of a Watch, that nothing may pass through the mouth without due Examination. But this is a foreign Sense, and reaches not our Case. However, I say with you, such Door-keepers ought all to be, that belong to the House of GOD, or 'tis not a Liturgy will secure from Crudities, and indigested Effusions.

Sir, By the formidable Advances you have made in these Premises, one would think that Free Prayer were depriv'd of the Gift of Speech through Consternation; but all this is only to bring it within the reach of the great Artillery of your Arguments, which I fear no great Danger from, they having for the most part been Answer'd already.

The first is taken from the Preparation that's said to be much better help'd by a Publick Liturgy, than it can be by Extemporary Effusions.

Ans. I plead not for Extemporary Effusions, nor do I say they help Preparation; nor have you consider'd that your Argument concludes as fully for the necessity of a

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Book to preach by, as to pray by: You do not plainly enough tell us what you mean by Preparation; If it be principally (as I think 'tis) in Meditation on the Majesty and Goodness of GOD, on our own and others Sins, Wants, and Mercies, why can I not be prepared to make or join in suitable Confessions, Petitions, Thanksgivings in Free Prayer without Pre-acquaintance with the Words that will be us'd? Besides, you don't tell us, What if a Liturgy contains several doubtful things, What if we know it to be Defective and Disorderly, is this an help to Preparation and Devotion? But you ask, *How can we prepare our selves for such an Exercise which we are wholly unacquainted with, and know neither the Matter, or Words, or Order, in which it will be deliver'd?* Ans. How could then the Primitive Christians be prepared for those Prayers, which (as you Dream) for some hundreds of Years were put up by Inspiration, when they foreknew *neither the Matter, nor Words, nor Order* of 'em? Did those that join'd with Solomon, Hezekiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c. not knowing the Words before-hand, *rush into the Presence of GOD, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle?* Or do all that hear your Ministers pray freely on any Occasion come unpreparedly to this Duty, and are they guilty of the Violation of the Command you mention *to prepare our hearts to seek the LORD?* Can't your People be prepared for a Fast or Thanksgiving day, because *the Trumpet gives an uncertain Sound*, (as you very pertinently apply the Scripture) and they can't come to know what will be said on such Occasions? This is the strength of your first Argument: I proceed to your

2d. *A well Compos'd Liturgy best helps to Pray with the Understanding, and therefore best promotes the Reverence of Divine Worship.* But why cannot we Pray as understandingly by a well Conceived Prayer, as by a well Compos'd Liturgy? No, these well Compos'd Liturgies have a mighty Advantage of *Obscure, Confus'd, Incoherent*

rem Extempore Effusions. True, But mayn't these be easily prevented by a due care in the Examination and Admission of Ministers, that they be such as have a competent Skill in the Body of Divinity, and whole Ability for Prayer as well as Preaching is Experimented, that the People shall have no just cause to nauseate the Worship of GOD, through their want of Judgment or Elocution, or for the *Obscurity and Confusion* of their Prayers? But who can think you in earnest in the Zeal you profess against *obscure Expressions, and dark Words and Phrases*, when you are resolv'd to use *Hopkins and Sternbold's* Version of the Psalms (though there's so great and better variety Extant)? Is every thing in that cloath'd in such familiar, intelligible Terms, and so admirably fitted to the Capacities of all your Congregations? If not, according to your own Principles, this is no reasonable (for the *Understanding makes* that) but an unreasonable Service.

However, 'tis a Form, it seems, that can only secure the *Reverence of Publick Worship*, and we are told By whom it must be Compos'd; *As Two Eyes see more than one*, so 'tis reasonable to conceive, That a Convocation of *Learned Divines* should better contrive the Matter and Method of Publick Worship upon mature Deliberation, than any single Person can do by his own sudden and indeliberate Effusions; (mark the Elegancy, to contrive Matter and Method by a Man's Indeliberate Effusions) This is so plain, that one would wonder how 'tis possible to be seduced into any thought or belief of the contrary.

Ans. And I think 'tis as plain, that a Convocation can better contrive the Matter and Method of our Sermons, (which, I hope, are a part of Publick Worship too) and so secure 'em from the Inconsistencies that are so notorious in yours; which if they had done, and omitted the *London Case*, 237, 238. 'tis probable we had lost this Argumentative Discourse, *Eminent for the satisfaction of Dissenters.*

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Your Third Argument says, *We may join with greater Faith and Assurance of being heard in a Form, than without it.* Now this I deny, and the most you alledge for its Proof, is either Confusion, or Self-contradiction. What follows from that saying of our LORD, *Matth. 18. 19. If two of you shall agree on earth, &c.* Ought therefore the Devotion of a whole Kingdom to be exprest in the same Words and Syllables? Or if there were any Consequence in this, what is it to the Argument?

You seem here to place that Faith we should exercise in Prayer, in an infallible Assurance that the Minister will utter nothing but what's Acceptable to GOD; but if your Readers are Uninspired, you can no more have this full Assurance than we; yet the Blunders that some commit in, are nothing to the careless, superficial, headlong manner of Reading that many are guilty of.

If the Dissenters may vent their Errors in their Prayers, so may you in your Sermons; If they may Pray one against another, as you'll venture to say it often happens, so you can't Pray one for another in a particular manner on multitudes of Occasions, without Liberty of varying. These are Evils, say you, that 'tis not possible to Remedy, whilst Men are left to vent what they please; But how can Free Prayer then be so excellent a Practice in Families as you have told us, where 'tis most improbable that such as join in it should have better security against Impropriety, or Absurdity, than our People have in Publick from their Ministers?

Your Fourth Argument is, That a Publick Liturgy helps us to perform the Duty of Prayer with the greatest Fervency, and the least Distraction; and the Reason to confirm it is, *Because the Soul of Man is of a Limited Nature in all its Operations, and can't attend to Two or more things at once; therefore the Inventing of Words in Prayer, which is the Exercise of the Brain, must needs be an hindrance*

drance to the Soul in Exciting the Affections, &c. And so the Ministers in Studying, and the People in Attending and Judging of the Sense and Soundness of the Prayers, can't apply themselves to the Duty without Distraction, or with Fervency; but by a Form this trouble is saved.

Ans. 'Tis granted on all hands, That 'tis the Will of GOD in his first and great Command, *Matth. 23. 37.* That all Persons should Worship him with the utmost Attention of Thought, Intention of Mind, and Fervor of Spirit. Now if some are able to do so by the Prescribed Forms of others, and others not able, 'tis plain that the Will of GOD is different as to these Two sorts of Persons; therefore we say the Proposing of a well Compos'd Publick Form is expedient in this Case. But then you are only the *Arbiter* of your own Experience, not of others; and therefore I again tell you, that the Injunction of your Form, and no other, and Assent and Consent to all and every thing in it, are highly Inexpedient. As for what you say, *That the Ministers Inventing of Words binders the greater business of the Heart, &c.*

I Answer x. The most proper, *viz.* Scriptural Expressions, will (according to Bishop W's. Scheme) easily follow, where the Judgment is furnished with a Treasury of Matter, and a fitting Method. That Torture of Study and Invention will be sav'd where the Heart is right with GOD, and so conscious of its Sins and Necessities, and so acquainted with the Word and Promises of GOD, and so frequently exercis'd in this Duty, as 'tis presum'd every Minister ought to be. As to the *Peoples Distraction in Studying and Judging*; This may be some difficulty on the Duller sort of Hearers, whose Understandings and Consent are not as quick as the Speakers Words may be; but then the Objection is as strong against all Sermons that they know not before-hand; and there are other Rocks that both Ministers and People are ready to split on a
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What a Temptation 'tis to Carelesness and Remissness to be held in the Fetters of an invariable Form, all sorts may find. Formal Hypocrites, like Parrots, speak the Words they don't regard; and their Tongues out-run their Hearts; as Mr. Baxter saith, *GOD's Eye and Man's together, will do more with almost all Men than one alone; Mens Thoughts don't use to be so accurately Govern'd as their Words;* therefore when Ministers know that as to Man's Approbation they need only Read what's in the Book before 'em, they are apt to let their Thoughts fly abroad, and their Affections lie down, because no Man takes account of these. — Whereas the free way of present Prayer excites the Understanding to Think, the Thoughts to Consider what to say, and to say it with Life too, or the Coldness will be sensible to the Hearers. Besides, such is the Frailty of Human Nature, That 'tis hard for any to be equally Affected with what is spoken a Hundred times, as when 'tis New, and cloath'd in a Comely variety of Expressions. Finally, We scarce think it possible for a Person to have and shew the like Affection and Fervency in a Speech that concerns his Life, which another hath made for him, as in his own: Nor have we ever heard of a Malefactor at the Bar that brought a Speech for his Life in a Form; or if he did, we believe there was sens'd by the Hearers a vast difference 'twixt such Speeches, and such as one makes to whom a lively Sense of his Condition dictates Words in that Extremity. I am forc'd in the close of this Argument to remind you, how you can recommend Free Prayer as a Pious Practice in Private, if it must of necessity be attended with the least Fervency, and greatest Distraction. Your

Fifth Argument is, *The whole Matter of Prayer may be better Comprised in full and comprehensive Sense, and digested into due Order and Method in a Publick Liturgy, than by sudden Effusions.* An. I may grant the Whole, and yet 'twill by no means follow that one who has read the Sacred Scriptures, learn'd Catechisms, has a Body of Divinity in his Head, has acquir'd a readiness and Facility by frequent

quent Practice, duly considers his own and others Wants and Mercies, and Premeditates his Method; I say, all that you alledge do's not prove it Impossible, nor Difficult to pray as Comprehensively and Orderly, and much more particularly and pertinently to various Occasions, than is done in your Liturgy. Besides, will not the same Topick of Order and Method as naturally afford us an Argument for Homilies? You always prove too little or too much.

Your Sixth Argument is extream convincing; viz. *That an Established Liturgy better prescribes the Use of the most Decent Gestures and Behaviour of the Body in the Services of GOD than Extempore Effusions, and so must best preserve the Reverence of Publick Worship.* Ans. I have hitherto taken a Liturgy only for Forms of Prayer, and so the Question has been more than once stated; But here it must be understood of the Rubrick that prescribes the manner, &c. of using these Forms. Now how unnatural is the Opposition of a Rubrick to Extempore Effusions? And yet it do's not follow, that an Established Liturgy has always the Advantage in this Respect, because it may prescribe such Antic, and Superstitious Gestures, as are worse than none. How crudely is it express'd that you find in your Excellent Liturgy such Pious Rules and Orders of External Decency, that in the Use of 'em we may be enabled to serve GOD Acceptably, &c. as Bowing at the Name of Jesus, (and why not at the Name of GOD, Christ, Jehovah, LORD, &c.) But if there be such Rules and Orders in the Country Villages, how glorious is it in the Cathedral Mother-Churches? There we have, as one saith, turning to the East, Bowing to the High Altar, such Ducking, Dopping, Bending, Bowing, Cringing, Changing of Postures; such a Ditty, such a Din, with Organs, Choristers, Singing-Men, and Boys, that a poor Rustick is ready to Question whether it be the same GOD that they and he Worship: And yet why may not the One serve GOD as Acceptably, yea with as much Reverence, with their ruder home-spun Devotion, as the other with such splendid, pompous Worship? The plain Dissenters differ no more from the one, than they do from each other: Tho' after all, the most high-flown of you are told by your Roman Neighbours, that you want many of those becoming Gestures, which are most Consonant to Antiquity, and most Expressive of the Reverence that is to be shewn in Divine Worship.

Your last Argument well pursued (as indeed most of the rest) would set us on a Level with Misery. There can be, say you, no other Cure of Indecencies in the Service of GOD but a Stated Liturgy. And can you better secure your Pulpits from Indecency in Sermons than by stated Homilies? Is not the Tongue here also liable to loose Excursions, and to unadvise'd Expressions? We need go no further for Matter of Fact to prove this by, than to this 17th Page. How Offensive to GOD-Tautologies, &c. are in our Approaches to him, you say plainly, appears by the sharp Rebukes our Saviour gave the Pharisees, (it should have been the Heathen) for their much Speaking, and vain Repetitions in Prayer. It more plainly appears hence by far, how little heed you give to what you write, and how little it deserves from others.

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